

THE *Hollywood* REPORTER

QUENTIN, RIDLEY & THE DIRECTORS

Boyle, Hooper, Inarritu and Russell
join *THR*'s annual roundtable

EXCLUSIVE

JACK MA'S FILM CHIEF TALKS

Alibaba's Zhang Wei reveals
China's Hollywood ambitions

One of Disney's
BB-8s photographed
Dec. 3 in Los Angeles

IMPACT of the FORCE

***Star Wars: The Force Awakens* is either the Death Star about to destroy everything in its path or film's Jedi savior. Now, on the eve of Hollywood's possible biggest opening ever, Lucasfilm's Kathleen Kennedy and Disney insiders reveal the 'organized chaos' behind the blockbuster that could change everything from movies to merchandise to ... race relations?**

“‘BLACK MASS’ IS TAUT AND

SCOTT FOUNDAS, *VARIETY*

“A MESMERIZING PERFORMANCE. JOHNNY DEPP EMBODIES THE ROLE OR RATHER DISAPPEARS INTO IT.

HE GIVES THE KIND OF LESS-IS-MORE PERFORMANCE THE ACTOR HAS SCARCELY BEEN ASKED TO DELIVER. AND DEPP MORE THAN RISES TO THE OCCASION, DOING CAREER-BEST WORK.”

SCOTT FOUNDAS, *VARIETY*

“‘BLACK MASS’ IS A TIGHTLY WOUND PIECE OF WORK, AND SCOTT COOPER KEEPS ITS MANY SMALL PARTS MOVING WITH EASE. HE’S SKILLFUL AT MERGING TELLING, MINUTE DETAILS WITH BIGGER, LOOPING SCHEMES.”

STEPHANIE ZACHAREK, *VOICE*

“A TOP-FLIGHT ENSEMBLE LED BY JOHNNY DEPP IN A PERFORMANCE THAT REMINDS US WHY HE’S ONE OF OUR MOST COMPELLING ACTORS.”

JOCELYN NOVECK, *AP*



F O R Y O U R C O N S I D E R A T I O N

BLACK MASS

BEST PICTURE

JOHN LESHER, p.g.a. | BRIAN OLIVER, p.g.a.
SCOTT COOPER | PATRICK McCORMICK
TYLER THOMPSON

BEST DIRECTOR

SCOTT COOPER

BEST ACTOR

JOHNNY DEPP

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

JOEL EDGERTON
BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH



WWW.WARNERBROS2015.COM

ELEGANTLY UNDERSTATED."



BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY
MARK MALLOUK | JEZ BUTTERWORTH

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
DAKOTA JOHNSON | JULIANNE NICHOLSON

**OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
BY A CAST IN A MOTION PICTURE**
JOHNNY DEPP | JOEL EDGERTON
BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH
RORY COCHRANE | JESSE PLEMONS
W EARL BROWN | DAVID HARBOUR
DAKOTA JOHNSON | JULIANNE NICHOLSON
KEVIN BACON | COREY STOLL
PETER SARSGAARD
ADAM SCOTT | JUNO TEMPLE

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MASANOBU TAKAYANAGI

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PRODUCTION DESIGNER
STEFANIA CELLA
SET DECORATOR
TRACEY DOYLE

BEST COSTUME DESIGN
KASIA WALICKA MAIMONE

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE
TOM HOLKENBORG

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AND HAIRSTYLING**
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JOEL HARLOW
HAIR DEPARTMENT HEAD
GLORIA CASNY

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SOUND MIXER
TOM WILLIAMS
RE-RECORDING MIXERS
MARK MANGINI
RON BARTLETT
CHRIS JENKINS

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MARK MANGINI
BYRON WILSON



"THE REAL STORY HERE IS
ABOUT PATRIOTISM,
TRUE AMERICAN PATRIOTISM,
BUILT AS MUCH ON OUR
SHARED VALUES AS OUR SHARED
HISTORY AND CULTURE.

IT'S ABOUT DOING THE
RIGHT THING.

I CAME AWAY FROM
'BRIDGE OF SPIES' WITH
A DEEP ADMIRATION
FOR THE DIRECTOR.

IN THE HEAT OF THE
COLD WAR, WE WERE RIGHT
BECAUSE WE DID RIGHT."

MSNBC HARDBALL
WITH CHRIS MATTHEWS
Chris Matthews

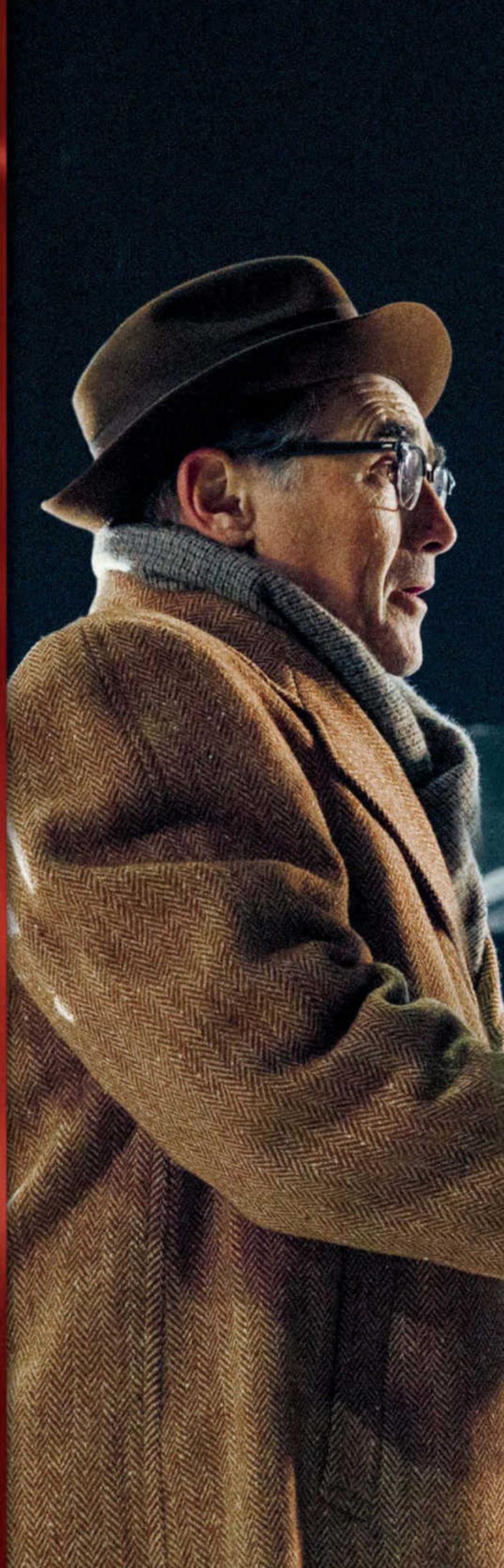
"'BRIDGE OF SPIES' TELLS
US THAT THE CONSTITUTION
IS NOT SOME QUAIN
NATIONAL LUXURY BUT THE
ROAD MAP OUT OF THE DARKNESS."

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE
Mick LaSalle

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
IN ALL CATEGORIES

BRIDGE^{OF}SPIES

For our screening schedule visit us at DreamWorksPicturesAwards.com
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70

Clockwise from left: Danny Boyle, Tom Hooper, Quentin Tarantino, Ridley Scott, *THR*'s Stephen Galloway, Russell and Inarritu were photographed Nov. 12 at Mack Sennett Studios in Los Angeles.



"If tomorrow an atomic bomb finishes humanity and I am the only one staying alive, will I make a film for myself? I don't think so."

ALEJANDRO G. INARRITU, *The Revenant* director

FEATURES

62 **A Star Is Born**

The movies, the mania, the merchandise: With the release of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* — starring BB-8 and humans such as Harrison Ford, John Boyega and Daisy Ridley — Disney is counting on a new wave of fandom to boost its bottom line. Time to see if the \$4 billion the Mouse House paid for Lucasfilm was worth it ...

70 **'The More You Get Humbled ... It's a Good Thing'**

Says David O. Russell, one of the six auteurs on *THR*'s annual A-list Director Roundtable, "There's a fractured war veteran in all of us," as they talk the lack of "middle-class films,"

their favorite movies, who's stopping at 10 pictures and what to learn from a soap star.

By Stephen Galloway

80 **Making of Brooklyn**

Saoirse Ronan nearly won an Oscar at age 13 for *Atonement*. Eight years later, she's giving it another try in a coming-of-age drama "that couldn't get more personal."

By Rebecca Ford

84 **The Best Picture Contest Doesn't Belong Just to the Boys**

As concerns about diversity rise to the fore, this year's contenders make more room for women and people of color. Plus, an annotated look at

the 15 films on the documentary feature shortlist and a close look at a few top foreign-language contenders. By Gregg Kilday



ON THE COVER
BB-8 was photographed Dec. 3 by Joe Pugliese at Milk Studios in Los Angeles.

WINNER | BEST FILM OF THE YEAR

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW | BOSTON ONLINE FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION

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BEST DIRECTOR
LOS ANGELES FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION
WASHINGTON DC AREA FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION
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WINNER
BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY
LOS ANGELES FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION
AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF CINEMA AND TV ARTS
BOSTON ONLINE FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION
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"IT'S IN THE SILENCES THAT DIRECTOR GEORGE MILLER'S **SINGULAR GENIUS** BECOMES EVIDENT. HE'S CREATED AN **EXCEPTIONAL, FEARLESS AND POETIC MASTERPIECE** THAT'S PRIMED TO BECOME A **MODERN CLASSIC.**"

LINDSEY BAHR, **AP**



BEST PICTURE

DOUG MITCHELL GEORGE MILLER PJ VOETEN

BEST DIRECTOR
GEORGE MILLER

**BEST ADAPTED
SCREENPLAY**
GEORGE MILLER
BRENDAN MCCARTHY
NICO LATHOURIS

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY
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Production Designer
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TOM HOLKENBORG

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DAN OLIVER
ANDY WILLIAMS

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

MAD MAX

FURY ROAD



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
IN ALL CATEGORIES
INCLUDING BEST PICTURE

5 FILM INDEPENDENT
SPIRIT AWARD NOMINATIONS
BEST FEATURE

BEST MALE LEAD ABRAHAM ATTAH
BEST SUPPORTING MALE IDRIS ELBA
BEST DIRECTOR CARY JOJI FUKUNAGA
BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY CARY JOJI FUKUNAGA

“IDRIS ELBA GIVES A
POWERHOUSE PERFORMANCE
AND THE OSCAR® FOR
BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR
SHOULD HAVE HIS NAME ON IT”

RollingStone

BEASTS OF NO NATION

WRITTEN FOR THE SCREEN AND
DIRECTED BY CARY JOJI FUKUNAGA



56

"There are two things I am crazy about: tennis and Spanish," says Chelsea Handler (left), photographed with Maria Sharapova on Oct. 13 at UCLA's Los Angeles Tennis Center.



42

"We come at the industry from a different angle," says Alibaba's Zhang.



53

Solar flair: Andrea Fohrman 14-karat yellow gold and lapis rings from the Galaxy collection (\$2,500 to \$3,200).



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Weinstein's backers are set to evaluate the cost-cutting, his TV sale efforts and the risky prospects for *The Hateful Eight*.

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At the premiere of *The Hateful Eight* and the March of Dimes Celebration of Babies luncheon.

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The Alibaba Pictures president reveals what China's web giant can offer Hollywood (and it's not just Superman sheets).

An HBO Spinoff? Why Time Warner's Jeff Bewkes Must Just Say No 46

Sure, the company's \$30 billion crown jewel might rival Netflix on its own, but that's the reason to keep it, not sell, despite the digital cheerleaders.

Creed Enters the Oscar Ring 48

Will Ryan Coogler's new film, starring Michael B. Jordan, follow in the award-winning footsteps of the original *Rocky*?

Reanimating Paul Walker 50

The actor's death didn't kill his *Furious 7* character — VFX artists, with the help of his two brothers, created 350 shots to keep him on the screen.

STYLE

Galactic Gems 53

It's *Star Wars* meets red-carpet dazzle as celestial-inspired diamond jewelry arrives with a glittery force this awards season.

Hollywood's Newest Smash Hit 56

Once a heyday favorite, tennis is undergoing a return to form in this town — from an inaugural celebrity tournament to civilized old-school stress relief and straight-set dealmaking.

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Joy and *The Revenant* By Todd McCarthy

Rapid-Round Q&A: Jennifer Jason Leigh

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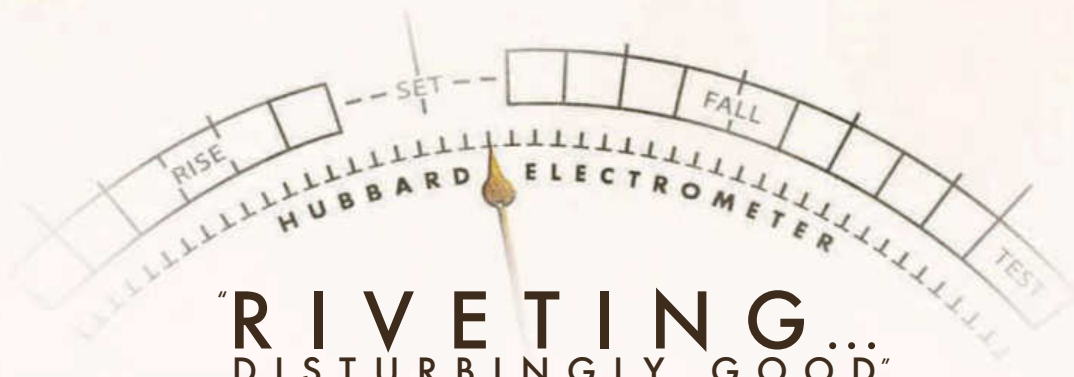
School of Rock By David Rooney

BACKLOT

8 Decades of *The Hollywood Reporter* 108

In 1979, Disney wanted the Force to be with *The Black Hole*.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE



"RIVETING...
DISTURBINGLY GOOD"

-ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

"EXPLOSIVE"

-NEW YORK POST

"A BRAVE, TIMELY
INTERVENTION"

-THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

"JAW-DROPPING...
SPECTACULAR"

-NEW YORK MAGAZINE

"PROFOUND...
EYE-OPENING
AND TRANSFORMATIVE"

-THE HUFFINGTON POST

"FASCINATING"

-VARIETY



HBO DOCUMENTARY FILMS PRESENTS

GOING CLEAR SCIENTOLOGY AND THE PRISON OF BELIEF

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ALEX GIBNEY

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F O R Y O U R C O N S I D E R A T I O N

“I’LL TELL YOU WHAT
FREEDOM IS TO ME...

NO FEAR.”

- NINA SIMONE

NETFLIX

A NETFLIX DOCUMENTARY

WHAT HAPPENED,
MISS SIMONE?

A FILM BY LIZ GARBUS



SCREENINGS

LOS ANGELES

DECEMBER 14

Rodeo Screening Room - 7:30 PM
Laemmle NOHO 7 - 7:30 PM

DECEMBER 21

Wilshire Screening Room - 7:30 PM
Laemmle NOHO 7 - 7:30 PM

DECEMBER 22

Ocean Screening Room - 7:30 PM

DECEMBER 28

Wilshire Screening Room - 7:30 PM
Ocean Screening Room - 7:30 PM

DECEMBER 30

Wilshire Screening Room - 7:30 PM

NEW YORK

DECEMBER 14

Magno Screening Room - 6:00PM

DECEMBER 22

Magno Screening Room - 6:00PM

DECEMBER 28

Technicolor Screening Room - 7:00PM

SAN FRANCISCO

DECEMBER 14

Variety Screening Room - 7:00PM

DECEMBER 22

Delancey Street Screening Room - 7:30PM

DECEMBER 30

Delancey Street Screening Room - 7:30PM

AMPAS, FIND, and IDA MEMBERS are welcome to RSVP for any of these screenings.

For Los Angeles based screenings

please send RSVP directly to WHMSLA@swisherproductions.com

For New York based screenings

please send RSVP directly to WHMSNY@swisherproductions.com

For San Francisco based screenings

please send RSVP directly to WHMSSF@swisherproductions.com

Please note the date, time and location of the screening you will be attending in the SUBJECT line.
Please give your full name, your affiliation and name of your guest.

THE Hollywood REPORTER

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"MASTERFUL. IT'S NOT JUST A GREAT DOCUMENTARY, IT'S A VITAL ONE.

Gordon and Neville find in these two men's infamous clash a turning point, the moment in time when the networks, the press, the pundits, and even average Americans first realized their taste for political bloodsport. A terrible beauty had been born, as they say. This might be the saddest film of the year."

— BILGE EBIRI, NEW YORK MAGAZINE

"A MUST-VIEW FILM FOR OUR MEDIA BESOTTED AGE.

All of it is hugely entertaining, but 'Best Of Enemies' is a serious film about a serious failure to communicate ideas."

— JOE MORGENSTERN, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"There could scarcely be any documentary more
**ENTICING, SCINTILLATING
AND DOWNRIGHT FASCINATING THAN**

'Best of Enemies'."

— TODD MCCARTHY, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

**"FLEET, BRUTALLY FUNNY AND
ULTIMATELY MOURNFUL**

for the lost art of informed public intellectuals brandishing wounding insights, the film is a fizzy bath of expertly organized archival footage and commentary from interviewees."

— ROBERT ABELE, LOS ANGELES TIMES

"MAKES A COMPELLING CASE

that modern TV news — i.e. the victory of volume and rage over civilized discourse —

STARTS HERE."

— DAVID FEAR, ROLLING STONE

BUCKLEY VS. VIDAL.
2 MEN. 10 DEBATES.
TELEVISION WOULD
NEVER BE THE SAME.

BEST OF ENEMIES

DIRECTED BY ROBERT GORDON & MORGAN NEVILLE



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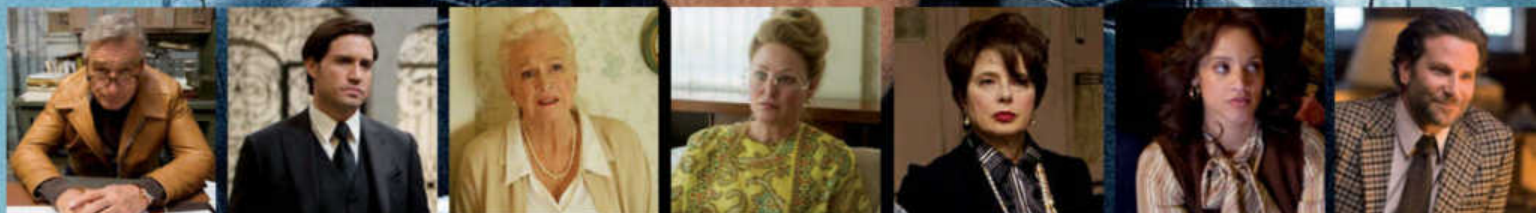
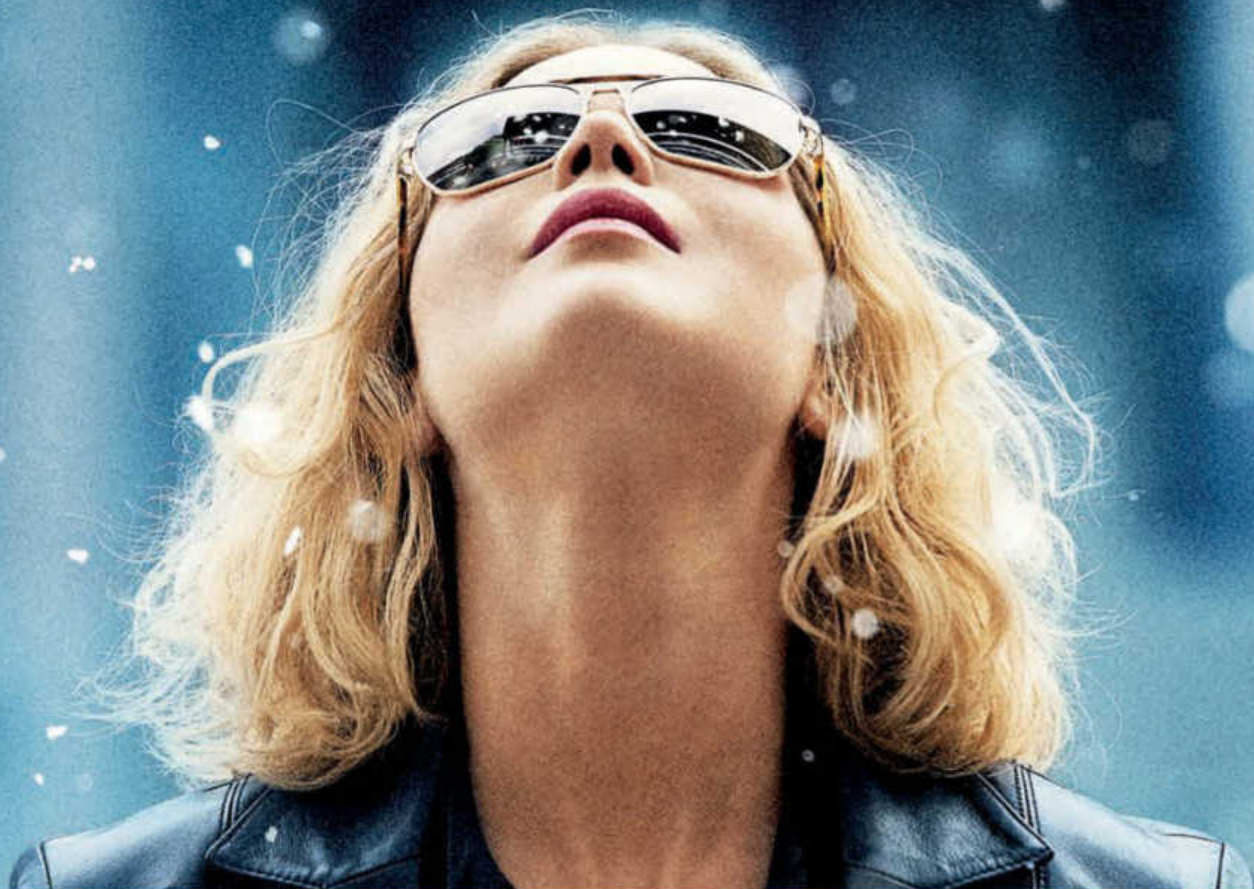
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AN INSIDE LOOK BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Harvey Charts a New Course: Will His Board Back Him?

A Dec. 11 meeting, the first since Weinstein and company slashed costs, will test investor appetite for a less ambitious film plan, TV properties for sale (*Project Runway*?) and risks like *Hateful Eight* By Tatiana Siegel

THE WEINSTEIN CO. DODGED ONE BULLET when its Dec. 7 premiere of *The Hateful Eight* took place without a promised “surprise” from the Fraternal Order of Police, the law enforcement group fuming over director **Quentin Tarantino**’s October comments about police “murderers.”

But co-founder **Harvey Weinstein** and his top lieutenant, COO **David Glasser**, will have to surmount more hurdles before they can exhale. Sources tell *THR* that Weinstein’s board of directors will meet Dec. 11 in New York to discuss the company’s future. It’s the first get-together of the board since Weinstein and Glasser instituted cost-cutting measures (including about 50 lay-offs) and put together a new business plan for the veteran indie studio. As rumors of a possible sale of some or all of its assets continue to swirl, the board will discuss several key issues including how to carve out individual TV assets if the entire division can’t be unloaded for the right price (a rich deal with ITV fell apart earlier this year). Sources say the *Project Runway* franchise, in particular, has several bidders interested.

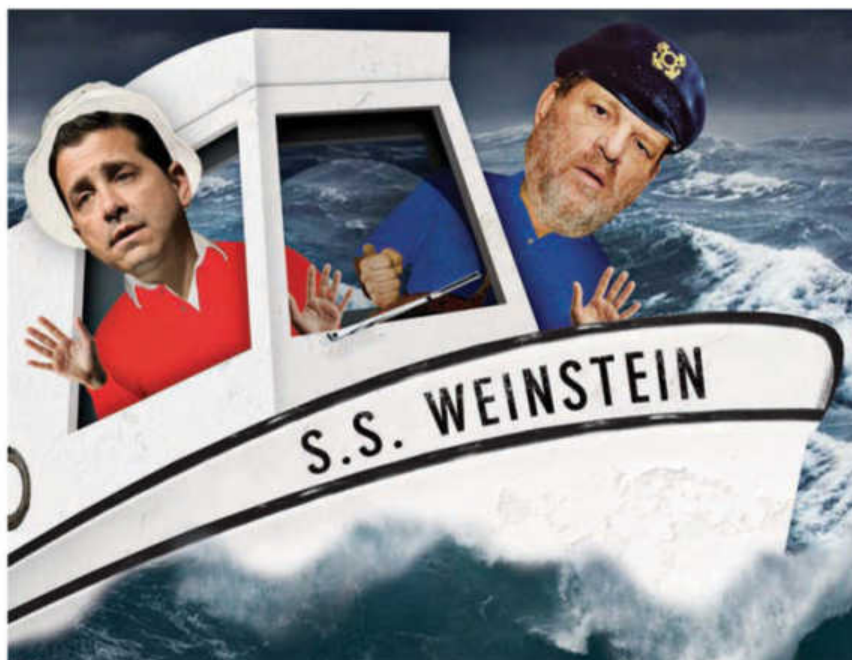
It remains to be seen if the nine-member TWC board — which includes Cablevision’s **James Dolan**, WPP’s **Martin Sorrell** and financier **Tarak Ben Ammar** — will be appeased by the company’s recent slashing of roughly one-fifth of TWC’s staff of 250 and trimming its annual slate of films from 16 to 10. Weinstein and brother **Bob Weinstein** hold a sizable stake in TWC and board seats, but they do not own a controlling interest, nor do they control the board, which sources say has grown increasingly impatient with the company’s financial returns. “Investors are still underwater significantly on their \$500 million initial investment,” says a board source.

But in an interview with *THR*, Weinstein downplays the significance of the meeting, instead characterizing it as a typical holiday board gathering. “There is all sorts of interest in our individual assets simply because those assets we built have become incredibly lucrative,” he says. “Of course, the board and investors want to monetize, but we want to also think about our progress and growth. Our films had a very strong year at the box office — not all home runs, but what studio can say that? From *The Imitation Game*, *Paddington*, *Woman in Gold*, *Southpar*

and now *Carol*, all have had amazing success and profitability for the company. And that’s all before *The Hateful Eight* opens this month, which we couldn’t be more excited about.”

On the board agenda, according to sources, is whether the company’s recent belt-tightening is sufficient. Harvey Weinstein also is expected to give an update on the unique roadshow-style release plan for the \$70 million-budgeted *Hateful Eight*, which opens Dec. 25 in 100 theaters in a three-hour-plus cut projected in 70mm, followed by a trimmed-down wide digital release Jan. 8.

The 70mm presentation — said to cost \$80,000 per



screen to resurrect the dormant format — already has proved challenging. A Dec. 2 press screening at the Majestic Crest Theatre in Westwood drew complaints due to technical difficulties. An earlier screening in New York was delayed 90 minutes because of projection problems. Theater owners are said to fear more issues when the film is shown to paying customers.

Though TWC’s board has pressured the company to allocate more of its resources to TV instead of film (where the majority of the layoffs occurred), the company still has an ambitious 2016 movie slate. Among the films on the horizon are the long-shelved **Natalie Portman** Western *Jane Got a Gun* in January, the boxing-themed *Hands of Stone* in March, the **Michael Keaton** starrer *The Founder*, about McDonald’s founder **Ray Kroc** in November and *The Six Billion Dollar Man* with **Mark Wahlberg** in December 2017.

THR HEAT INDEX



KENDRICK LAMAR
 The rapper leads Grammy nominations with 11, including album and song of the year, topping **Eminem** as the hip-hop artist with the most noms in a single year.



STACEY DASH & RALPH PETERS
 The Fox News contributors are suspended for two weeks for using what a network rep calls “completely inappropriate and unacceptable” profanity to criticize **President Obama**.



SHANICE WILLIAMS
 NBC’s unknown 19-year-old Dorothy in *The Wiz* earns strong reviews and 11.5 million same-day viewers (about 2.3 million more than 2014’s *Peter Pan*).



BILL LEE
 The longtime Alchemy film exec is out, replaced by co-presidents **Scott Guthrie** and **Kelly Summers**, as the indie struggles to compete in the increasingly crowded space.

SHOWBIZ STOCKS

▲ **\$38.69 (+2.7%)**
ACTIVISION (ATVI)

Research firm InfoScout says the gamemaker’s *Call of Duty: Black Ops 3* was the top-selling game on Black Friday.

▼ **\$49.59 (-4.2%)**
VIACOM (VIA)

Mario Gabelli, who controls the second-largest block of voting shares, chastises the conglomerate for not disclosing details about **Sumner Redstone**.

Nov. 30-Dec. 7

Several finished films, including transgender dramedy *About Ray* — acquired at Cannes — remain undated. Producers with films at TWC privately grumble about the lack of a seasoned marketing executive. Though **Stephen Bruno** left for Netflix more than a year ago, TWC has not replaced him.

“As with any board, we meet to discuss the company’s plans,” adds Weinstein. “No one likes laying off anybody. TWC is still, for us, a mom-and-pop shop.”

In many ways, *Hateful Eight* mirrors the obstacles TWC faces with its film division: an expensive product with a pricey rollout trying to navigate a competitive marketplace. Tarantino’s last film, *Django Unchained*, grossed \$425 million worldwide for TWC. But that film wasn’t up against *Star Wars*, and it starred **Leonardo DiCaprio**, in contrast to the



Weinstein (left) and Tarantino at the Dec. 7 L.A. premiere of *The Hateful Eight*.

smaller-scale *Hateful Eight* with an ensemble including **Kurt Russell**, **Samuel L. Jackson** and **Channing Tatum** in a small role. For his part, Bob Weinstein seemed undaunted at the L.A. premiere when asked what his response was when Tarantino told him about the project. “F— yeah, Quentin. You better believe I’m in on this mission,” he recalled saying, after which Tarantino turned to the audience and yelled, “Are you ready to get some hate up in this bitch?!” **TJR**

GUEST COLUMN

Going Live for Shootings Is TV News’ Killer App

Outrage over CNN, MSNBC and other outlets rifling through the San Bernardino suspects’ home is misplaced — these days, on-camera urgency and the unfolding narrative trump journalistic virtues By Andrew Tyndall

THE SORDID SPECTACLE OF PACKS OF journalists on live television combing through the intimate belongings of a married couple and dead terrorists in their abandoned apartment near San Bernardino was hardly inspirational. But it was hardly a new normal, either.

Journalists have hunted in packs since the dawn of their profession. What was unusual Dec. 4 was the laxity of local police in their failure to prepare the apartment’s landlord for the horde’s onset — and that the event aired live.

“Breaking News,” as the chyron loves to boast, is the killer app of 24-hour television news. Just as cable system operators rely on the appeal of live sports to prevent subscribers from cord-cutting, just as broadcasters rely on red-carpet awards shows and single-elimination reality TV contests to prevent viewers from defecting to online streaming, so cable news offers live coverage of headline events as they unravel as its unique journalistic proposition.

In recent weeks, as San Bernardino has followed the Planned Parenthood hostage siege in Colorado and the Bataclan concert hall massacre in Paris, it might seem as though live coverage on cable confines itself to mass shootings. But this is a twofold misapprehension.

First, live news can manifest itself in various formats, not just shootings. A pair of foundational events for the cable news industry consisted of the low-speed car chase of **O.J. Simpson** in 1994, followed by gavel-to-gavel coverage of his ultimate acquittal on murder charges: Both live; neither shootings. Politics, too, can make for riveting live television: Remember the Senate committee hearings into **Anita Hill** and **Clarence Thomas** in 1991 or the hanging-chad recounts in the 2000 presidential



CNN and MSNBC aired live video from the home of shooting suspects Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik.

election. The Pentagon famously capitalized on cable news’ penchant for live footage by facilitating embedded war correspondents’ coverage of the “shock and awe” invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Second, very few so-called mass shootings, of the hundreds that occur nationwide each year, rise to the level of newsworthiness to attract saturation coverage on the cable channels. (By the way, the use of the word “mass” is such hype. In San Bernardino, fewer than two score were hit by bullets. In no other context are so few considered masses.)

The carnage in San Bernardino attracted the attention of cable news even before the identities and allegiances of the killers were discovered. Its interest

was piqued not just by the large number of dead but by the unusual nature of the attack: not a lone suicidal gunman found dead on the scene but a trio of male attackers (it was reported at the time) who killed and escaped alive. This anomaly prompted the national networks to stick with the story through a fatal police shootout with an SUV, documented live from news helicopters of their local affiliates and aired during the nightly news time slot.

It was here that the conflicting priorities of cable news — to cover breaking events live — and an old-school newscast became jarringly obvious. The newscast normally would have aired well-written, tightly edited, informative journalism. The pre-empting live coverage contained none of those elements. It delivered no fact-checked knowledge, no concise writing, no edited video — just the helicopter feed.

Going live was the killer app; it trumped all other journalistic virtues. And the same applied when that landlord let those cameras into that dead couple’s abandoned apartment.

Andrew Tyndall is an independent news analyst and publisher of The Tyndall Report.

‘People Don’t Have Time to Think’

By KATIE COURIC



IT’S REALLY CHALLENGING, ESPECIALLY IN THE PROVERBIAL 24-HOUR NEWS environment, to always do things the right way. There is a sincere effort on the part of reporters to convey the latest information to a public that is hungry for details and anxious to understand the story. As a result, people literally don’t have time to think before they broadcast, and they’re so anxious to impart the information to the public that sometimes the best decisions aren’t made. It’s because they’re trying to get as much information as they can. But the gap between newsgathering and news delivery has shrunk to literally nothing, so people are now, and have been for some time, privy to how news is made. That presents a lot of challenges. News organizations probably need to step back and think about how they’re doing things. Just because the technology allows you to doesn’t always mean you should. — AS TOLD TO REBECCA FORD

ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR

TIME

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Entertainment
WEEKLY

BOSTON ONLINE FILM
CRITICS ASSOCIATION

People

AFRICAN AMERICAN FILM
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WINNER
BEST DIRECTOR
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WINNER
BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR
SYLVESTER STALLONE

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW
BOSTON ONLINE FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION

WINNER
BEST ACTOR
MICHAEL B. JORDAN

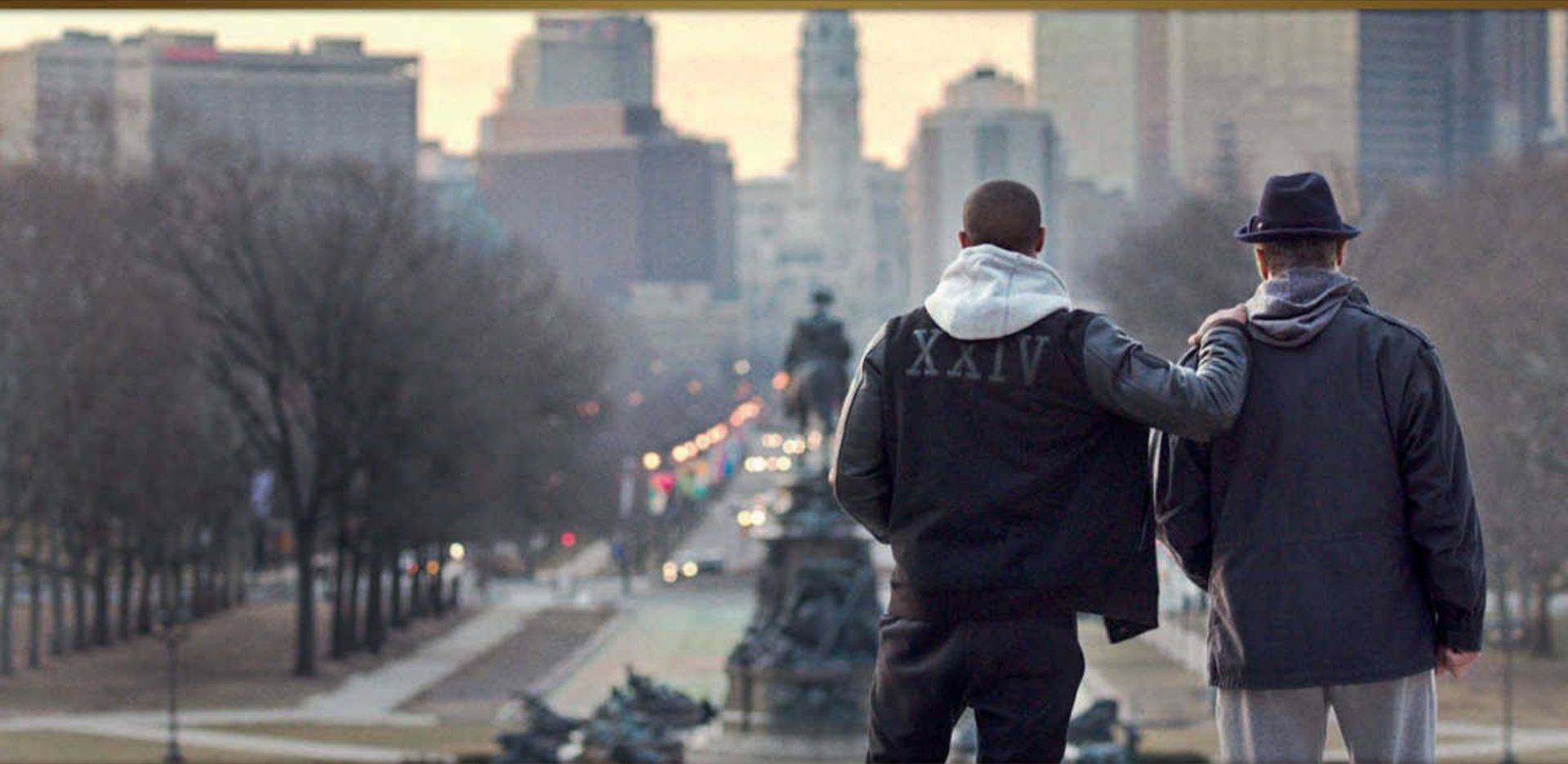
BOSTON ONLINE FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION

"COOGLER'S GREATEST ASSET WAS HIS OWN SKILL AS A DIRECTOR, HIS GIFT FOR BRINGING A COMBINATION OF UNDERSTATED NATURALISM AND INVOLVING STORYTELLING TO THE SCREEN."

KENNETH TURAN, *Los Angeles Times*

"STALLONE DELIVERS HIS GREATEST PERFORMANCE SINCE THE ORIGINAL ROCKY. HE'S TOUCHING, FUNNY, WARM, IMMENSELY LIKABLE, AND, WITHOUT EVER PUSHING, EFFORTLESSLY CONVEYS GRACE AND GRAVITAS."

STEPHEN REBELLO, *PLAYBOY*



BEST DIRECTOR
RYAN COOGLER

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR
SYLVESTER STALLONE

BEST ACTOR
MICHAEL B. JORDAN

BEST PICTURE

IRWIN WINKLER, p.g.a. ROBERT CHARTOFF, p.g.a. CHARLES WINKLER WILLIAM CHARTOFF DAVID WINKLER
KEVIN KING-TEMPLETON, p.g.a. SYLVESTER STALLONE, p.g.a.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

CREED



STORY BY
RYAN COOGLER

WWW.WARNERBROS2015.COM

SCREENPLAY BY
RYAN COOGLER & AARON COVINGTON





Spanish-language films *Ahora o Nunca* (Sony), *Perdiendo el Norte* (Warner Bros.) and *Ocho Apellidos Catalanes* (Universal) have outgrossed U.S. tentpoles.

Hollywood's New Foreign Invasion

U.S. studio-backed local-language movies are booming, perhaps nowhere more so than in Spain, where Sony's *Ahora o Nunca* beat *Spectre*

By Pamela Rolfe and Scott Roxborough

THIS IS WHAT A HOLLYWOOD blockbuster looks like in Spain these days: a low-budget rom-com that pokes fun at the Catalan independence movement. Universal's *A Spanish Affair 2* became the top opener in the country with \$8.4 million in November, beating the \$8.2 million record set by the studio's *Fifty Shades of Grey* in February. The \$3 million-budgeted sequel is on track to become the top earner in Spain this year, just one of several local-language hits bankrolled by U.S. studios.

In the past decade, Hollywood increasingly has invaded key foreign markets with custom-made films, producing and distributing non-English titles from Buenos Aires to Berlin to Bangalore. Warner Bros. is behind a series of German comedy hits, including Til Schweiger's 2014 blockbuster *Head Full of Honey* (\$66.5 million local gross), and this year the studio signed a joint venture with China

Media Capital to produce Chinese-language films. Fox has a deal in China with the Huace Media Group, and in September it signed a first-look pact in Russia with local hitmakers Paul Heth and Michael Schlicht. Sony, one of the first in the foreign-language game with *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* in 2000, has active local production outlets from South America to India.

But perhaps nowhere has the local-lingo model worked as well as it has in Spain. Warner's *Perdiendo el Norte*, a comedy about unemployed Spaniards who seek their fortune in Germany, is Warner's top performer in the country this year, grossing \$11 million. Paramount had a \$12 million hit with the Spanish animation *Capture the Flag*, topping its best Hollywood import, *Mission: Impossible — Rouge Nation*, which earned \$7 million there. Sony's Spanish wedding disaster comedy *Ahora o Nunca* earned \$8.5 million, better than its Bond tentpole *Spectre* (\$6.5 million).

"Three years ago, I would have been surprised that Warner Bros. and Paramount's best box-office performers were Spanish hits, but not now," says analyst David Rodriguez of Rentrak Spain, which reported that Spanish films took in a record 25.5 percent of the domestic box office in 2014, the biggest slice since 1977. This year, Spanish films are expected to account for about 20 percent of the total take. In addition to *Spanish Affair 2*, Fernando Gonzalez Molina's *Palm Trees in the Snow*, a big Warners release, bows Christmas Day.

For the studios, local titles deliver more bang for their low-budget buck. Universal's four Spanish-language releases this year — out of 24 pictures — accounted for 23.4 percent of the studio's box-office haul. Universal Pictures International Spain GM Jose Luis Hervias sees Spanish titles as an "organic part" of his strategy, which focuses on theatrical because home video has been decimated by piracy.

At the same time, Hollywood titles have become less dependable earners in Spain. Warner's *San Andreas* earned just \$3.5 million, and Disney's *Ant-Man* grossed \$4 million. "Hollywood product (in Spain) is everything or nothing," says Ghislain Barrois, CEO of *Spanish Affair* producer Telecinco Cinema. "You have a handful of extremely successful pictures (that) perform better than expected or it's a disaster."

In this winner-takes-all market, he argues, the lower-risk/high reward model of local-language production is an opportunity few studios are willing to pass up. **TJR**

Sundance Hits the Issues — and Courts Controversy

Guns, ISIS and even a North Korea doc are in the politically charged lineup for the Jan. 21-31 festival

RACE

Sundance festival director John Cooper and programmer Trevor Groth never shy from hot-button topics, but the 2016 lineup seems especially news-driven. Into America's race debate comes Nate Parker's *The Birth of a Nation*, which chronicles the deadly 1831 slave rebellion led by Nat Turner. Comic W. Kamau Bell is bringing *United*

Shades of America, a CNN docuseries that includes an exchange with a Klansman. And the fest will premiere Ezra Edelman's 7½-hour racially charged documentary *O.J.: Made in America*.

POLITICS

Barack Obama woos Michelle Robinson on a 1989 date in Richard Tanne's sure-to-be dissected *Southside With You*. Documentarians Josh



Southside With You

Kriegman and Elyse Steinberg got full access to Anthony Weiner's New York mayoral campaign and the sex scandal, and wife Huma Mahmood Abedin, Hillary Clinton's adviser, plays a big role. "What's riveting is it's less about him and more about watching Huma's reaction," says Cooper.

GUNS

Kim A. Snyder's *Newtown*

traces the aftermath of the school shooting; Stephanie Soechtig's *Under the Gun* looks at the broader issue and the root of political inaction; Tim Sutton's narrative *Dark Night* takes place over a single day that ends with an Aurora-like cineplex massacre.

ISIS

Brian Oakes' *Jim* details his friend and journalist James Foley's public execution and



The Birth of a Nation

the global platform it gave the terrorist group, while Bahman Ghobadi's *A Flag Without a Country* follows two Kurds, singer Helly Luv and pilot Nariman Anwar, as their lives are altered from war and ISIS attacks.

NORTH KOREA

Undeterred by Kim Jong Un's response to *The Interview*, Robert Cannan and Ross Adam helmed *The Lovers and the Despot*, following the true story of a director and his actress ex-wife who were kidnapped by Kim Jong Il and forced to make films for him.

— TATIANA SIEGEL



Cooper

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

NETFLIX

A NETFLIX DOCUMENTARY

“POWERFUL...

A VIVID TALE OF HEROISM AND VILLAINY”

- A.O. SCOTT, *The New York Times*

“...THE BEST DOCUMENTARY
I’VE SEEN THIS YEAR”

- MARK JOHNSON, *AwardsCircuit*

“A TOUR DE FORCE”

- OLEG IVANOV, *SLANT*

“A TESTAMENT
TO THE HUMAN SPIRIT”

- TRICIA OLSZEWSKI, *THE WRAP*
Covering Hollywood

“EXCEPTIONAL”

- ERIC KOHN, *Indiewire*

WINTER ON FIRE

UKRAINE’S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM



Now Streaming



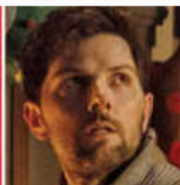
Weekend Numbers

DOMESTIC		INT'L		TOTAL
Gross	Cume	Gross	Cume	

1. **Mockingjay Part 2** LIONSGATE
18.9 | 227.4⁽³⁾ | 32.4⁽⁹²⁾ | 296.8 | 524.2

2. **Krampus** UNIVERSAL
16.3 | 16.3⁽¹⁾ | 3.5⁽²⁴⁾ | 3.5 | 19.8

Thanks to younger moviegoers, the \$15 million horror comedy brought much-needed holiday cheer for producer Legendary and outperformed expectations.



3. **The Good Dinosaur** DISNEY
15.3 | 75.8⁽²⁾ | 19.4⁽⁴⁵⁾ | 55.4 | 131.2



Despite an A CinemaScore, the animated family film tumbled 61 percent in its second weekend, the steepest drop for a Pixar title. *Cars 2* fell 60 percent in July 2011.

4. **Creed** WARNER BROS.
15 | 64.6⁽²⁾ | 1.5⁽⁹⁾ | 5.3 | 69.9

5. **Spectre** SONY
5.5 | 184.6⁽⁵⁾ | 23⁽⁹⁴⁾ | 607.5 | 792.1

6. **The Night Before** SONY
5 | 32.1⁽³⁾ | N/A | 2.6 | 34.7

7. **The Peanuts Movie** FOX
3.6 | 121.5⁽⁵⁾ | 2⁽¹⁴⁾ | 13 | 134.5

8. **Spotlight** OPEN ROAD
2.8 | 16.5⁽⁵⁾ | N/A | N/A | 16.5

9. **Brooklyn** FOX SEARCHLIGHT
2.4 | 11.2⁽⁵⁾ | N/A | N/A | 11.2

10. **The Secret in Their Eyes** STX
1.9 | 17.2⁽³⁾ | N/A | N/A | 17.2

11. **The Martian** FOX
1.6 | 220.8⁽¹⁰⁾ | 13.7⁽³³⁾ | 352.4 | 573.2

12. **Love the Coopers** LIONSGATE
1.5 | 22.7⁽⁴⁾ | N/A | N/A | 22.7

13. **Chi-Raq** ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS
1.2 | 1.2⁽¹⁾ | N/A | N/A | 1.2

Spike Lee's film is the first title from Amazon Studios, which is trying to rival Netflix in the original movies space. *Chi-Raq*, a Shakespearean take on gun violence, did best in Chicago, where it is set.



14. **Trumbo** BLEECKER STREET
951K | 4.2⁽⁵⁾ | N/A | N/A | 4.2

15. **Victor Frankenstein** FOX
747K | 5.1⁽²⁾ | 4.9⁽³⁸⁾ | 19.1 | 24.2

Source: Rentrak; box-office estimates in \$ millions
(*) Weekends in release; (†) Territories



ITV Chief: 'Chaos Creates Opportunity'

Producer Brent Montgomery takes the reality behemoth's top U.S. job at a tough time for the unscripted industry: 'A lot of companies are struggling, and it's going to get worse' By Lacey Rose

UNDER NEW CEO BRENT MONTGOMERY, ITV America will depend in part on the power of celebrity.

Rather than focus on adding production companies to the ITV group, Montgomery and chief creative officer Adam Sher say they will seek entrepreneurial talents with whom to partner, including Bethenny Frankel and upcoming Fox reality star John Cena. Other priorities for Montgomery, tapped Dec. 3 to take the helm of the largest independent U.S. producer of nonscripted content, include ramping up development across the ITV portfolio, which includes ITV Entertainment (Fox's *Hell's Kitchen*), Gurney Productions (A&E's *Duck Dynasty*), Thinkfactory Media (Lifetime's *Preachers' Daughters*), High Noon Entertainment (TLC's *Cake Boss*) and DiGa (MTV's *Teen Wolf*).



Montgomery

Montgomery, 41, says he planted seeds for his role when his New York-based Leftfield Entertainment was acquired by ITV for \$360 million in May 2014. Over lunch with ITV CEO Adam Crozier, Montgomery said he would like to be considered if his boss, Paul Buccieri, were to move on. What he didn't know was Buccieri would announce in November 2014 that he was departing for a top job at A+E Networks. Months later, ITV managing director Kevin Lygo reached out to Montgomery.

The appointment makes Montgomery the latest veteran producer to be put at the helm of an unscripted behemoth, following Thom Beers (formerly atop FremantleMedia North America) and Cris Abrego and Charlie Corwin (Endemol Shine North America). He has spent years amassing executive training, however, along with an unscripted empire at Leftfield, which

houses five companies including its eponymous flagship (History's *Pawn Stars* and *Counting Cars*) and Sirens Media (Bravo's *The Real Housewives of New Jersey*). Adding ITV's shingles appealed to his entrepreneurial side, he says, and he was eager to see if he could apply the Leftfield strategy to a larger company. Plus, he adds of recent ratings slides for unscripted shows, "We're in a very chaotic time in the industry, and chaos creates opportunity." Montgomery is pragmatic about the industry's prospects, citing challenges like a severe reduction in second-season renewals (most producers make little to nothing on a first season). "A lot of companies are struggling, and it's going to get worse because the network struggle takes six to 12 months to hit the production companies," he says, noting that producers often have less financial padding than networks. "What we're headed for is further consolidation, and the companies that have the best rosters of creative talent and run an efficient operation are going to have an enormous advantage over those who don't."

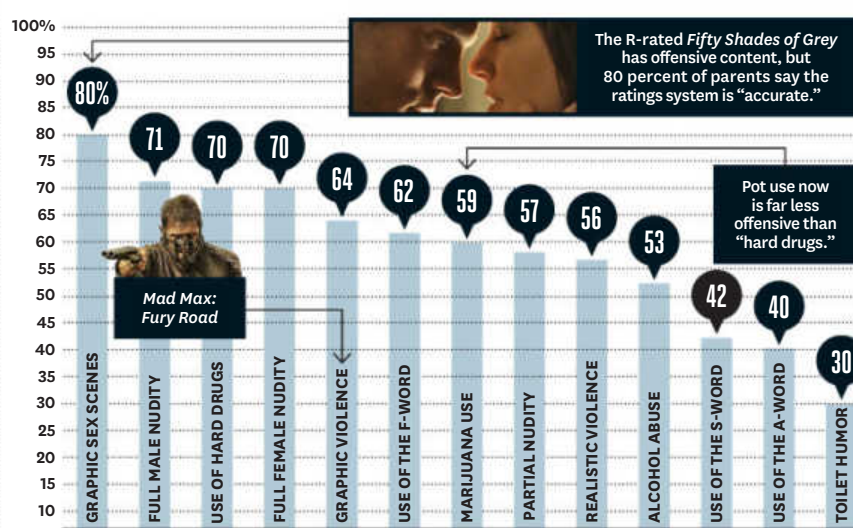
One way Leftfield has stayed well-positioned is by investing in its own development, a strategy Montgomery intends to bring to ITV. It allows him to move projects at his speed. "Every network is afraid to make bets, and therefore they're making things a three- to four-step process, and that process generally takes about a year — and often we're seeing the mandate and the network executive change over in that time," he says. "So where a network used to spend \$100 on 10 projects, they're now spending \$100 on 100 projects. It's a dangerous web, especially for new entrants into our space." **TV**



Sher

PARENTS FEAR SEX, NOT GORE

Sex and nudity in movies remain the top concern for parents, but violence and language — save for the F-word — have fallen to the lower end of that spectrum. Those findings are part of the 2015 Parents Ratings Advisory Study conducted by Nielsen for the ratings agency run by the MPAA and NATO. While 80 percent of U.S. parents are concerned about graphic sex scenes in movies, only 64 percent bemoan graphic violence. Ratings board chair Joan Graves touts the findings as evidence of why, despite criticism, the board has been tougher on sex than violence. — PAMELA MCCLINTOCK



Source: Classification & Rating Administration

Discover ROOM

"THE MOST IMPRESSIVE PIECE OF FILMMAKING I'VE SEEN IN 2015 AND
ONE OF THE BEST MOVIES OF THE DECADE."

RICHARD ROEPER, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

**"A ONE-OF-A-KIND,
MUST-SEE EXPERIENCE.**

BRIE LARSON AND JACOB TREMBLAY
ARE ASTONISHING."

LOU LUMENICK, *NEW YORK POST*

**"THE KIND OF FILM
YOU NEVER FORGET
YOU SAW.**

ORIGINALLY CRAFTED AND INGENUOUSLY
ADAPTED BY EMMA DONOGHUE."

SANDY COHEN, *AP* Associated Press

**"ROOM' CARRIES
AT ITS HEART
A MESSAGE OF HOPE:**

TWO PEOPLE IN FOUR WALLS CAN
CREATE A WORLD WORTH
SURVIVING FOR, IF THEY LOVE
EACH OTHER ENOUGH."

DANA STEVENS, *Slate*

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
IN ALL CATEGORIES INCLUDING

BEST PICTURE

Produced by ED GUINEY, p.g.a., DAVID GROSS

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PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

tiff.40 toronto
international
film festival

WINNER
BEST ACTRESS
BRIE LARSON
NATIONAL BOARD
OF REVIEW

WINNER
BREAKTHROUGH
PERFORMANCE
JACOB TREMBLAY
NATIONAL BOARD
OF REVIEW

BEST DIRECTOR
LENNY ABRAHAMSON

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY
EMMA DONOGHUE
Based on the Novel by Emma Donoghue

BEST ACTRESS
BRIE LARSON

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR
JACOB TREMBLAY

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
JOAN ALLEN

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY
DANNY COHEN BSC

BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN
ETHAN TOBMAN

BEST FILM EDITING
NATHAN NUGENT

BEST COSTUME DESIGN
LEA CARLSON

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE
STEPHEN RENNICKS

BEST SOUND MIXING
ERIC FITZ
STEVE FANAGAN
KEN GALVIN

BEST SOUND EDITING
NIALL BRADY
STEVE FANAGAN

BEST MAKEUP & HAIRSTYLING
Makeup
SID ARMOUR
Key Hairdresser
JENNIFER GOULD

BEST VISUAL EFFECTS
ED BRUCE

WINNER
aspen
FILMFEST
Audience Award
2015

WINNER
Audience Award
2015
HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL

WINNER
Audience Award
2015
MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL

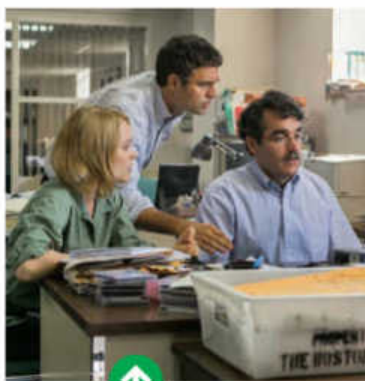


the REPORT



Critics have tossed their picks into the mix, further shaking up the races, as the Golden Globe noms will get the real competition going By Scott Feinberg

BEST PICTURE



Spotlight

A best film win from the Boston Society of Film Critics was a given, but it also got best pic prizes from N.Y. Online and L.A. critics — plus screenplay wins from all three.



The Revenant

It needs critical love to sell it to voters, but so far it only has gotten a best actor win from the Boston critics, and that was a tie between Leonardo DiCaprio and Paul Dano.

BEST ACTOR



JOHNNY DEPP | Black Mass

Accolades in this category have been spread all over the place — except for this Oscar-less veteran, who had been regarded as a frontrunner.

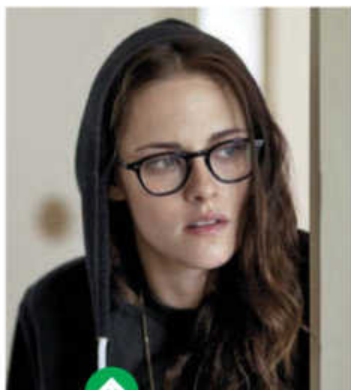
BEST ACTRESS



CHARLOTTE RAMPLING | 45 Years

Anyone calling this category a race between Brie Larson and Saoirse Ronan got a wake-up call when critics in L.A. and Boston opted for this British veteran.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS



KRISTEN STEWART Clouds of Sils Maria

She became the first American actress to win one of France's Cesar Awards, and three critics groups just joined the chorus.

BEST FEATURE DOCUMENTARY



The Look of Silence

Joshua Oppenheimer's follow-up to 2012's *The Act of Killing* made the Academy's shortlist and won the top prize at the International Documentary Awards.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
IN ALL CATEGORIES

BEST PICTURE

PRODUCED BY

GAIL MUTRUX, ANNE HARRISON
TIM BEVAN, ERIC FELLNER, TOM HOOPER

BEST DIRECTOR
TOM HOOPER

BEST ACTOR
EDDIE REDMAYNE

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
ALICIA VIKANDER AMBER HEARD

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR
BEN WHISHAW SEBASTIAN KOCH
MATTHIAS SCHOENAERTS

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY
LUCINDA COXON

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY
DANNY COHEN BSC

BEST FILM EDITING
MELANIE ANN OLIVER ACE

BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN
EVE STEWART, PRODUCTION DESIGNER
MICHAEL STANDISH, SET DECORATOR

BEST COSTUME DESIGN
PACO DELGADO

BEST MAKE-UP AND HAIR STYLING
JAN SEWELL,
MAKE-UP AND HAIR DESIGNER

BEST SOUND EDITING
MATT SKELDING

BEST SOUND MIXING
MIKE PRESTWOOD SMITH,
RE-RECORDING MIXER
GILBERT LAKE, RE-RECORDING MIXER
MARTIN BERESFORD AMPS,
PRODUCTION SOUND MIXER

BEST VISUAL EFFECTS
RICHARD REED,
VISUAL EFFECTS COMP SUPERVISOR
STUART LASHLEY,
VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE
ALEXANDRE DESPLAT

SPOTLIGHT: KERRY HAVES/OPEN ROAD FILMS; REVENANT: REVIEWART; CLOUDS OF SILS MARIA: NITECKASUNDANCE SELECTS; SILENCE: COURTESY OF DRAFTHOUSE FILMS; PARTICIPANT MEDIA; CLOUDS: CAROLE BETHUEL/OG CINEMA/SUNDANCE SELECTS; MASS: COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES.

WITH LOVE COMES THE COURAGE TO BE YOURSELF

“★★★★.

GORGEOUS, HEARTBREAKING
AND UNFORGETTABLE.
EDDIE REDMAYNE GIVES
THE PERFORMANCE OF THE
YEAR IN ‘THE DANISH GIRL’.”

REX REED, NEW YORK OBSERVER

“ONE OF THE YEAR’S
FINEST FILMS.”

SARA STEWART, NEW YORK POST

“TOM HOOPER HAS CRAFTED A
WORK OF PROBING INTELLIGENCE
AND PASSIONATE HEART.”

PETER TRAVERS, ROLLING STONE

“EDDIE REDMAYNE GIVES
THE GREATEST PERFORMANCE
OF HIS CAREER. THERE’S NO
DENYING THAT TOM HOOPER AND
SCREENWRITER LUCINDA COXON
HAVE DELIVERED
A CINEMATIC LANDMARK.”

PETER DEBRUGE, VARIETY

“A BEAUTIFUL AND
POIGNANT LOVE STORY.”

ERIN WHITNEY, THE HUFFINGTON POST

“ALICIA VIKANDER
CONJURES SOMETHING
DAZZLING AND UNEXPECTED.
SHE IS STUNNING AND
EXTRAORDINARY.”

CHRIS NASHAWATY,
ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

THE DANISH GIRL

WORKING TITLE

CD PRODUCTIONS

#TheDanishGirl

For more on this film, go to www.FocusGuilds2015.com



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7 DAYS OF DEALS

KA-CHING!
WHO'S INKING
ON THE DOTTED LINE
THIS WEEK

WILL HBO GO DIGITAL IN FOREIGN MARKETS? 'TAKE IT CASE BY CASE'



SHOULD HBO ADJUST its global strategy?

The network serves 92 million non-U.S. subscribers by operating foreign networks (in 60 countries), licensing its programming (to more than 150 markets) or launching over-the-top digital services, as it did with HBO Nordic in 2012.

All have proved successful, but some analysts predicted HBO would prioritize the third approach, pointing to Netflix's global OTT rollout. But the company instead has doubled down on licensing in some big markets, extending exclusive pacts with single partners, including in Japan and Canada. In November, HBO consolidated Sky deals in five countries into a single arrangement after the latter company became a Pan-European pay TV giant in 2014.

Fox's Star India struck an exclusive deal for such HBO originals as *Game of Thrones* and *True Detective*, which previously aired on the HBO Defined channel that will be discontinued. HBO also will rebrand its movie channel in India.

"They have decided that it is more profitable to let others license their content and brand versus build an OTT product in certain markets," says Moffett Nathanson's Michael Nathanson. "In others, like the Nordics and Latin America, they have decided they should do it themselves."

HBO CEO Richard Plepler has hinted at more OTT moves, though "we're going to take it case by case," he said in August. Indeed, the proliferation of OTT services, including from Netflix and Amazon,

has driven up the cost of content. But HBO international and content distribution chief Simon Sutton says that's not necessarily a reason to go OTT: "Yes, you have Netflix launching around the world, but



Sutton

each market has launched a bunch of new services in anticipation of Netflix. That has pushed up the value of licensing and tilted the scale."

The HBO strategy varies by market, "according to how receptive it is to HBO programming and media regulation," says Wunderlich's Matthew Harrigan. "Global direct-to-consumer is still a huge growth vector."

Many expect HBO to reveal another foreign OTT deal soon. But in some countries, OTT launches from other companies have strengthened HBO's hand in licensing. Adds MKM Partners' Eric Handler, "The preferred path is to have either a pay TV or OTT presence so you can benefit from a recurring subscription revenue stream."

— MARISA GUTHRIE AND GEORG SZALAI

Rights Available!

Hot new books with Hollywood appeal

BY ANDY LEWIS AND REBECCA FORD

The Things We Keep

BY Sally Hepworth

(St. Martin's)

AGENCY Rob Weisbach

The Australian novelist evokes *Still Alice* and *The Notebook* with the story of a 38-year-old with early-onset Alzheimer's who falls in love with a young male patient at her assisted-living facility — and the single mother risking her job to keep them together.



The Couple Next Door

BY Shari Lapena (Pamela Dorman Books)

AGENCIES ICM, The Helen Heller Agency

The psychological thriller has nabbed more than 20 foreign-language sales during the past two weeks, including a two-book U.S. pact. Centering on a young couple who leaves their daughter at home to visit their "friendly" neighbors, Lapena's debut is primed for a film deal before it hits shelves in fall 2016.

A Fan Fiction Author's Unique Book Deal



Todd

ANNA TODD'S LATEST ONE Direction-inspired fan fiction novel, *Before*, hit shelves Dec. 8, but parts of it already had been read more than 6 million times online. The sneak peek was authorized thanks to a clause in her mid-six-figure Gallery Books deal that allows her to maintain much of her work on Wattpad, a self-publishing site where her initial three-book *After* series has attracted more than 800 million reads. "There are whole relationships in the comments," says Ashleigh Gardner, head of content at Wattpad, which represents Todd. "We were looking for a company that would make something additive for fans rather than taking something away."

It's a new model for authors, but as Wattpad expands into publishing and film (the site signed with UTA, and Paramount is developing an *After* movie), some warn Todd's deal might be a one-off. "It's one data point," says Gallery senior editor Adam Wilson. "She's a unique case." — REBECCA FORD



FILM

Creed's Ryan Coogler (WME, Cohen & Gardner) is in talks to direct *Black Panther* for Marvel.

Josh Hutcherson (CAA, Beddingfield, Hansen Jacobson) will join Kate Upton, Hannibal Buress, Ari Graynor, *Mixology*'s Andrew Santino and Jacki Weaver in James Franco and Seth Rogen's *The Disaster Artist*, about the making of cult film *The Room*, for New Line.

Ethan Hawke (CAA, MGMT, George Sheanshang) will join Cara Delevingne and Clive Owen in Luc Besson's sci-fi adaptation *Valerian*.

Helen Mirren (CAA) will join Will Smith in the drama *Collateral Beauty* for New Line.

TriStar has acquired worldwide rights to Danny Boyle's *Trainspotting* sequel.

Barbra Streisand (CAA, Martin Erlichman) will direct a biopic of the Russian empress Catherine the Great.

Audra McDonald (WME) and Rumer Willis (APA, Untitled, Gang Tyre) will star in the musical adaptation *Hello Again*.

Stephany Folsom (Verve, Kaplan Perrone, Morris Yorn) will work on the script for *Thor: Ragnarok*.

Chernin Entertainment will adapt Neal Shusterman's YA novel *Challenger Deep*, with Shusterman writing the script.

Jason Priestley (APA, Canada's Characters Talent, Thruline, Jeremy Tenser) will direct the biopic *Nice Guy Phil*, with Daran Norris playing the late Phil Hartman.

David Gould (WME) will adapt the nonfiction book *Death Row Chaplain* for Casey Affleck and John Powers Middleton's company The Affleck/Middleton Project.

The *Perfect Guy*'s David M. Rosenthal (WME, 3 Arts, Morris Yorn) will direct the postapocalyptic thriller *How It Ends*.

TELEVISION

Shailene Woodley (UTA, Principato Young, Felker Toczek) will join Nicole Kidman and Reese Witherspoon in David E. Kelley's limited series *Big Little Lies* for HBO.

T.I. (UTA, Category 5, Sloane Offer) will join Forest Whitaker, Mekhi Phifer, James Purefoy and Matthew Goode in A+E's *Roots* remake.

Chasing Life's Italia Ricci (ICM, Coast to Coast, Protege, Felker Toczek) will play a villain on CBS' *Supergirl*.



Shailene Woodley

The Big Number

Predicted growth in digital advertising spending in 2015, to \$160 billion, putting digital on pace to overtake TV ad spending in 2017, according to a Dec. 7 study.

17%

REP SHEET



▲ **Adam Levine** and **Maroon 5** have left CAA for **WME**.

Karl Urban, who plays **Bones** in the *Star Trek* franchise, has signed with **UTA**.

Lethal Weapon 4 writer **Jonathan Lemkin** has left **WME** for **Verve**.

Alberto Rosende, a series regular on **Freeform's** upcoming *Shadowhunters*, has signed with **PMK*BNC**.

NEXT BIG THING



Name
Tavi Gevinson
Reps

UTA, Lichter Grossman

Why She Matters

The influential blogger, 19, is getting into acting with *Scream Queens* and the drama *Human People*, opposite **Michael Cera**.



Josh Hutcherson



Ryan Coogler

The *Creed* helmer is in negotiations to direct **Chadwick Boseman** in *Black Panther*, Marvel's first film centered on a black superhero.



T.I.

Queen Latifah (**CAA**, **Principato Young, Eisenberg Tanchum**) will star in **Lee Daniels'** music drama pilot *Star* for **Fox** with newcomers **Jude Demorest**, **Ryan Destiny** and **Brittany O'Grady**.

Fear the Walking Dead's **Colman Domingo** (**Gersh, Liebman**) will become a regular on the series.



Helen Mirren

Stephen Falk (**UTA, Jackoway Tyerman**) will develop for **FX** a semiautobiographical comedy from fellow *You're the Worst* writer **Alison Bennett** and the comedy *Join Me* from the show's **Franklin Hardy** and **Shane Kosakowski**.

Spike has ordered sci-fi adaptation *Red Mars* straight to series. ... **HBO** will develop

the comedy *Brotherhood*, set in a Baptist university secret society, with *Hand to God* playwright **Rob Askins**. ... **Fox** has ordered the hypnosis game show *You're Back in the Room* and will develop the multiple-perspective horror thriller *Through My Eyes* with *Fringe's* **J.H. Wyman** and the reboot *Rambo: New Blood* with *Die Hard's* **Jeff**

Stuart. ... **ABC** has ordered to pilot the detective drama *Presence* from **John Ridley** and will develop the Latino legal drama *Accidentes* with



Carolla's La Canada home.

the **Tannenbaum Co.** and *Accepted's* **Mark Perez**. ... **NBC** has renewed *The Blacklist*. ... **CNBC** has renewed *Jay Leno's Garage*. ... **TLC** has renewed the docuseries *I Am Jazz*, about a transgender teen.

DIGITAL

Dexter's **Scott Buck** (**CAA, Felker Toczek**) will showrun Marvel's *Iron Fist* for **Netflix**.

Sony's **Crackle** has renewed *The Art of More*.

BOOKS

Oprah Winfrey (**WME**) will publish the memoir *The Life You Want* via **Flatiron** in 2017 and has launched a publishing imprint at **Macmillan**.

Mark and Jay Duplass (**ICM, Sloane Offer**) will publish an essay collection via **Ballantine**.

Al Franken (**Williams & Connolly**) will publish a memoir about his career on *Saturday Night Live* and in the Senate via **Hachette** imprint **Twelve**.

COMEDY

Jerry Seinfeld (**ICM, Shapiro West, Hansen Jacobson**) has set a monthly residency at **The Beacon Theatre** in **New York**.

SPORTS

Nike has signed **LeBron James** to a lifetime deal for shoes and apparel.

REAL ESTATE

Adam Carolla (**Coldwell Banker**) has purchased a house in **La Canada Flintridge** for \$2.5 million.

www.thr.com | THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER | 27

"PAUL WEITZ'S WRY AND INSIGHTFUL MOVIE. THE WONDER THAT IS 'GRANDMA' CAN BE SUMMED UP IN TWO WORDS: LILY TOMLIN."

—A.O. Scott, THE NEW YORK TIMES

"LILY TOMLIN HAS NEVER BEEN BETTER. SHE WORKS MIRACLES AND LEAVES YOU DAZZLED. SAM ELLIOTT IS SUPERB."

—Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE



BEST ACTRESS
LILY TOMLIN

GRANDMA
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY PAUL WEITZ

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SUTTON: COURTESY OF HBO. KEEP: COURTESY OF ST. MARTIN'S PRESS. TODD: FRAZER HARRISON/AMA 2014/GETTY IMAGES FOR DCP. BEFORE: COURTESY OF SIMON & SCHUSTER. WOODLEY: JON KOPALOFF/FILMMAGIC. HUTCHERSON: LARRY BUSACCA/GETTY IMAGES. COOGLER: ALBERTO E. RODRIGUEZ/GETTY IMAGES. T.I.: JASON MERRITT/GETTY IMAGES. MIRREN: CRAIG BARRITT/GETTY IMAGES FOR THE WEINSTEIN CO. FALK: STEFANE KEENAN/GETTY IMAGES FOR CRITICS CHOICE TELEVISION AWARDS. CAROLLA: COURTESY OF REALTOR.COM. LEVINE: STEVE GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE. GEVINSON: GEORGE PIMENTEL/WIREIMAGE.

YES, I DID SAY THAT!

A look at who's saying what in entertainment

Compiled by
Seth Abramovitch & Brian Porreca

➡ “But what is ‘It’? There is no ‘It’! And who was ‘It’ before ‘It’? And when does ‘It’ go away?”

BRIE LARSON

The *Room* star, on how she feels about being dubbed the “it” girl of the moment.



➡ “I’ve never been the guy stumbling out of bars at 3 in the morning, at least that anyone is aware of.”

RYAN REYNOLDS

The *Deadpool* actor, commenting on his low-key, non-rebellious image.

➡ “I said, ‘Hef wants me to do the last cover,’ and [Brandon] goes, ‘Mom, you’ve got to do it. We’re older, we’re not embarrassed anymore of you.’ ”

PAMELA ANDERSON

The actress and model, 48, on the conversation with her 19-year-old son that led her to pose for the cover of the final *Playboy* issue featuring photos of naked women.

➡ “It’s almost a *Saturday Night Live* skit. It’s fantastic.”

ALEJANDRO G. INARRITU

The *Revenant* director, on a popular Internet story claiming that Leonardo DiCaprio’s character is raped by a bear in the film. Fox dispelled the rumor with a statement: “The bear in the film is a female. ... There is clearly no rape scene.”

➡ “He has an incredible will to live ... and to enjoy life.”

PHILIPPE DAUMAN

The Viacom CEO, allaying mounting investor fears that executive chairman Sumner Redstone, 92, has become incapacitated and incapable of running the media empire.

➡ “Will reserve him a seat on the Blue Origin rocket.”

JEFF BEZOS

The Amazon founder, suggesting (in only his fourth tweet ever) that Donald Trump be sent into orbit aboard a Bezos-owned rocket after the candidate accused the mogul of not paying “fair taxes.”

➡ “‘Come spend some time in my cell, baby!’ ”

CHRIS HEMSWORTH

The *In the Heart of the Sea* star, on what inmates shouted out at him as he toured a high-security prison while doing research for *Blackhat*.

➡ “I was thinking, ‘Lord, please don’t let me slap a bitch on national TV.’ ”

PADMA LAKSHMI

The *Top Chef* host, a native of India, on appearing alongside Ann Coulter on *The View*, during which the conservative pundit said, “We don’t need to be importing other countries’ poor people.”



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
BEST DOCUMENTARY DIRECTED BY
DAVIS GUGGENHEIM

**"GRADE A.
ONE OF THE BEST MOVIES OF THE YEAR."**

Chris Nashawaty, *Entertainment*

"BRIGHT-SPIRITED AND PROFOUNDLY MOVING."

Joe Morgenstern, *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

**"BOTH AN INTIMATE PORTRAIT OF THE YOUNG ACTIVIST
AND A SWEEPING ANTIDOTE FOR CYNICISM,"**

the inspiring story toggles between poignant footage of Malala today acclimating to life in Birmingham, England, with her endearingly normal family, and dream-like animated flashbacks of their existence in Pakistan's Swat Valley."

Rebecca Keegan, *Los Angeles Times*

"THIS WELL-CRAFTED AND DEEPLY AFFECTING

documentary digs below the iconography surrounding teenage activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai."

Soren Andersen, *The Seattle Times*



HE NAMED ME
MALALA

WIDE NATION

Cartoonist
media

FOX SEARCHLIGHT
PICTURES

WIDE NATION

FOXSEARCHLIGHT.COM/FYC

Women in Enterta

SO HERE WE ARE, UNVEILING *THR*'S UNRANKED POWER 100 LIST. IT'S A GOOD ONE, FILLED with 22 new entries (28 if you count each of the Kardashians and Jenners — and yes, that includes Caitlyn), each offering a snapshot of the direction of the industry now. But this list isn't just an A-to-Z. Universal's Donna Langley is *THR*'s Women in Entertainment Executive of the Year. There's also the 2015 Power Squad — the women who drove Hollywood's top decisions and dollars of the past 12 months, many of whom oversee others on the list (all categorized by their primary pursuit). In the past few weeks, outlets from CNN to NPR to *The Atlantic* have covered *THR*'s decision to kibosh the Power 100 rankings. Jada Pinkett Smith tweeted: "Time to hunt as a pack! Woman up!"; and Liz Phair followed up with, "Crusty old Hollywood gets a microderm." Largely, the decision was applauded, though a handful of pundits thought it was patronizing to treat women with "kid gloves." I think they clearly missed the point. Congratulations to the 2015 Power 100. — JANICE MIN

The Power Squad

Elizabeth Banks • 41
Actress-producer-director

Barbara Broccoli • 55
Producer, Eon Productions

Ilene Chaiken • 58
Showrunner, Empire

Taraji P. Henson • 45
Actress, Empire

Nancy Dubuc • 46
President and CEO, A+E Television Networks

Bonnie Hammer • 65
Chairman, NBCUniversal Cable Entertainment Group

Cindy Holland • 46
VP original content, Netflix

Megyn Kelly • 45
Host, The Kelly File, Fox News Channel

Kathleen Kennedy • 62
President, Lucasfilm

Donna Langley • 47
Chairman, Universal Pictures

Jennifer Lawrence • 25
Actress, The Hunger Games, Joy



From left: Rhimes, Walden, Banks

Shari Redstone • 61
President, National Amusements

Shonda Rhimes • 45
Executive producer, Grey's Anatomy, Scandal, How to Get Away With Murder
Viola Davis • 50
Actress, How to Get Away With Murder
Kerry Washington • 38
Actress, Scandal

Amy Schumer • 34
Actress-writer, Inside Amy Schumer, Trainwreck

Dana Walden • 51
Chairman and CEO, Fox TV Group

The Chiefs

Frances Berwick* •
President, Lifestyle Networks, NBCUniversal Cable Entertainment

Paula Kerger • 57
President and CEO, PBS

Debra Lee • 61
Chairman and CEO, BET Networks

Amy Miles • 49
CEO, Regal Entertainment

Courtney Monroe • 46
CEO, National Geographic Global Networks

Diane Nelson • 48
President, DC Entertainment; president and CCO, Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment;

president, Warner Bros. Worldwide Consumer Products

Stacey Snider • 54
Co-chairman, 20th Century Fox

Oprah Winfrey • 61
Chairman, CEO/ chief creative officer
Sheri Salata • 56
President, OWN

Susan Wojcicki • 47
CEO, YouTube

Cyma Zarghami • 52
President, Viacom Kids & Family Group

The Film Forces

Kristine Belson • 51
President, Sony Pictures Animation

Bernardine Brandis • 62
Executive vp business affairs, The Walt Disney Studios

Megan Colligan • 42
President of worldwide distribution and marketing, Paramount

Ann Daly • 59
President
Bonnie Arnold • 59
Mireille Soria • 60
Co-presidents, feature animation, DreamWorks Animation

Elizabeth Gabler • 58
President, Fox 2000

Sue Kroll • 54
President of worldwide marketing and distribution, Warner Bros. Pictures

Veronika Kwan Vandenberg • 52
President of worldwide distribution, Warner Bros. Pictures

Claudia Lewis • 59
President of production, Fox Searchlight

Hannah Minghella • 36
President, TriStar Pictures

Vanessa Morrison • 46
President, Fox Animation

Amy Pascal, 57
Producer, Pascal Pictures

Terry Press • 55
President, CBS Films

Nancy Utley • 60
President, Fox Searchlight

Emma Watts • 45
President of production, 20th Century Fox

The Industry Stewards

Cheryl Boone Isaacs • 66
President
Dawn Hudson • 59
CEO, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

Lori McCreary • 54
President, Producers Guild of America; CEO, Revelations Entertainment

Keri Putnam • 50
Executive director, Sundance Institute

The Makers

Gail Berman • 59
Chairman and CEO, The Jackal Group

Mara Brock Akil • 45
Showrunner, Being Mary Jane

Ava DuVernay • 43
Director, Selma

Megan Ellison • 29
Producer, Annapurna Pictures

Dede Gardner • 48
Co-president, Plan B Entertainment

Gale Anne Hurd • 60
Executive producer, The Walking Dead

Nina Jacobson • 50
Producer, The Hunger Games

Jenji Kohan • 46
Showrunner, Orange Is the New Black

Jill Leiderman • 44
Executive producer, Jimmy Kimmel Live!

Mary Parent • 47
Producer, The Revenant

Gigi Pritzker • 53
Founder, OddLot Entertainment

Jill Soloway • 50
Showrunner, Transparent

The TV Set

Bela Bajaria • 44
President, Universal Television

Gina Balian • 41
Executive vp limited series
Nicole Clemens • 46
Executive vp series development, FX Networks

Sarah Barnett • 50
President and GM, BBC America

Marie Donoghue • 50
Executive vp global strategy and original content, ESPN

Michele Ganeless • 50
President, Comedy Central

Marketing Titans

Stephanie Gibbons • 55
President of marketing and on-air promotion, FX Networks

imminent Power 100



Langley is THR's Women in Entertainment Executive of the Year. The WIE issue is available to subscribers and online at THR.com/WIE2015

Lisa Gregorian • 52
President and CMO, Warner Bros. TV Group
Pamela Levine*
CMO of HBO
Marla Provencio • 49
Executive vp marketing and CMO, ABC Entertainment Group

Sheila Nevins*
President,
HBO Documentary Films

Tonia O'Connor • 46
COO and president
of content distribution,
Univision

Ad Sales Stars

Jo Ann Ross • 62
President of network sales,
CBS
Geri Wang • 55
President, ABC Sales
Linda Yaccarino • 52
Chairman, advertising
sales and client partnerships,
NBCUniversal

Susan Rovner • 46
Executive vp development,

Warner Bros. TV, and
co-president, Warner Horizon
Scripted TV

Jennifer Salke • 51
President, NBC
Entertainment

Sandra Stern*
President, Lionsgate TV

Deborah Turness • 48
President, NBC News

The Stars

Cate Blanchett • 46
Actor, Carol

Ellen DeGeneres • 57
Host/producer, The Ellen
DeGeneres Show

Lena Dunham • 29
Jenni Konner • 44
Creators and executive
producers, Girls;
co-founders, Lenny

Tina Fey • 45,
Amy Poehler • 44
Actors/producers, Sisters

Angelina Jolie Pitt • 40
Actor/filmmaker/writer

**The Kardashians
& Jenners**
Reality stars

Julia Louis-Dreyfus • 54
Actor/executive producer,
Veep

Melissa McCarthy • 45
Actor, Spy

Meryl Streep • 66
Actor, Suffragette

Reese Witherspoon • 39
Actor, producer

The Reps

Lorrie Bartlett • 52
Partner/co-head of talent,
ICM Partners

Michelle Bohan*
Partner/talent agent,
WME

Maha Dakhil • 40
Motion picture agent, CAA

Julie Darmody • 48
Partner/manager,
Rise Management

Toni Howard • 71
Partner, ICM Partners

Sharon Jackson*
Partner/talent agent,
WME

Tracey Jacobs • 57
Partner/board member,
UTA

Nancy Josephson*
Partner/TV agent, WME

Aleen Keshishian*
Partner
Cynthia Pett • 53
Co-president
Brillstein Entertainment
Partners

Debbie Klein • 55
Head of TV, Paradigm

Blair Kohan • 47
Partner/motion picture agent,
UTA

Hylda Queally • 54
Motion picture talent agent,
CAA

Rena Ronson*
Partner/head of independent
film group, UTA

Sonya Rosenfeld*
Co-head of TV, CAA

Leslie Siebert • 53
Senior managing partner,
Gersh

Beth Swofford*
Motion picture agent, CAA

The Dealmakers

Heads of Business Operations

Deborah Barak • 58
President of business
operations, CBS
Entertainment, CBS TV
Studios and CBS News
Beth Roberts • 57
Executive vp business
operations, NBCUniversal
Cable Entertainment

Jana Winograde • 51
Executive vp and head of
business operations,
ABC Entertainment
Television Group

Melanie Cook • 62
Partner, Ziffren Brittenham

Distribution Chiefs

Marion Edwards*
President of international
television, 20th Century
Fox Television Distribution
Frances Manfredi*
President, NBCUniversal
Television & New Media
Distribution, U.S. & Canada
Janice Marinelli*
President, Disney/ABC
Home Entertainment and
Television Distribution
Belinda Menendez*
President, NBCU
International Distribution
& Networks

Patty Glaser • 68
Partner and chair of
litigation, Glaser Weil Fink
Howard Avchen & Shapiro

General Counsels

Kimberly Harris • 45
Executive vp/general counsel,
NBCUniversal
Gwen Marcus • 59
Executive vp/general counsel,
Showtime
Rebecca Prentice • 62
Executive vp/general counsel,
Paramount
Rita Tuzon • 56
Executive vp/general counsel,
Fox Networks Group
Leah Weil • 55
Senior executive vp/general
counsel, Sony Pictures

Linda Lichter • 64
Partner, Lichter Grossman
Nichols Adler & Feldman

Jeanne Newman • 61
Partner, Hansen
Jacobson Teller Hoberman
Newman Warren Richman
Rush & Kaller

Nina Shaw • 61
Partner, Del Shaw
Moonves Tanaka Finkelstein
& Lezcano

*Denotes women who declined to reveal their age

PHOTOGRAPHED BY Miller Mobley

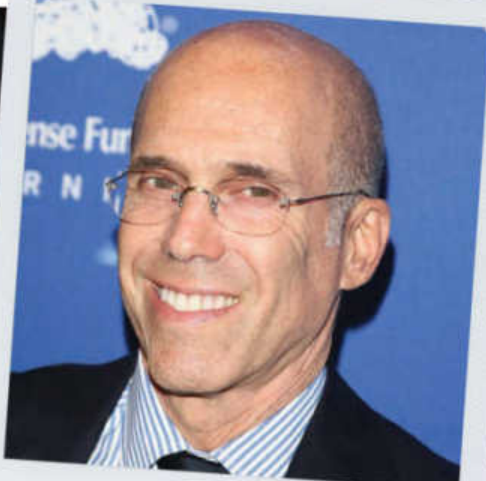
About Town

HOLLYWOOD HITS THE RED CARPET

Beat the Odds Awards

Beverly Hills, Dec. 3

FIVE INSPIRING HIGH SCHOOL students are always the real stars of the Children's Defense Fund's gala, and the 25th annual Beat the Odds Awards, co-chaired by J.J. Abrams, didn't disappoint. The students — each honored with \$10,000 toward college, plus support services — were feted with documentaries (and celebrity presenters) that detailed their hardship and perseverance. CDF founder **Marian Wright Edelman** also left a lasting impression with her impassioned speech targeting gun violence in the U.S. "We've got to retire the NRA from being in charge of our national defense," said the activist, who received a standing ovation following her seven-minute speech. "A country that doesn't keep its children and parents safe does not stand for anything." — CHRIS GARDNER



Jeffrey Katzenberg at the gala, which awarded students with college funds in addition to such CDF services as private tutoring, one-on-one college counseling, ongoing mentoring, internship placements, SAT prep and college tours.



1 Abrams (left) and *Star Trek's* Joaquin Phoenix.



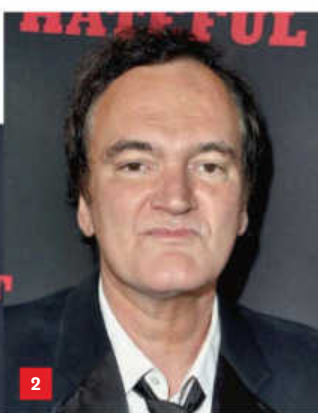
3 "This is my favorite night of the year," said emcee Conan O'Brien (with wife Liza Powell).

2 Writer Misha Green was flanked by presenters Jussie Smollett (left) and his sister Jurnee Smollett-Bell.

4 Presenter Gwendoline Christie of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

The Hateful Eight

Hollywood, Dec. 7



1 The film's Kurt Russell with Goldie Hawn at the ArcLight.

2 Writer-director Quentin Tarantino, whose New York protest rally in which he dubbed some cops "murderers" led to unfounded speculation that police might show up at the premiere.

3 Co-stars Channing Tatum (left) and Samuel L. Jackson.

4 Jenna Dewan Tatum hit the carpet.



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TONIGHT 10

FX

About Town

HOLLYWOOD HITS THE RED CARPET

Fox Holiday Party

Los Angeles, Dec. 6



1 From left: Virginia Madsen, Joy co-star Bradley Cooper, director David O. Russell and Laura Dern.



1



3

Damon, who flew in from Europe where he's shooting *Bourne 5*: "I literally just got home."

2 Giannina Facio is flanked by her husband, *The Martian* director Ridley Scott (right), and star Matt

3 Fox film co-chair Stacey Snider with her husband, real estate developer Gary Jones.



Party crasher Sylvester Stallone (left) with 20th Century Fox chair Jim Gianopulos, who threw his annual party at his Brentwood home. Despite the number of contenders feted, he said it's important to treat the films "equally."

March of Dimes

Beverly Hills, Dec. 4



1



2

1 Actors Odette and Dave Annable at the fundraiser for the group that aims to prevent birth defects and infant mortality.

2 From left: Universal Pictures president Jimmy Horowitz, studio chair Donna Langley and Joe Roth. Said Horowitz: "With this luncheon, we reintroduce the [Hollywood] community to this organization."

3 Honoree Jessica Alba received the 2015 Grace Kelly Award for her healthy baby products company, The Honest Co.

4 Producer Scott Stuber (left) and Jason Bateman at the Beverly Wilshire.

5 Inspiring Woman of the Year award recipient, Universal Television president Bela Bajaria.



5



4



3

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OFFICIAL ENTRY • SWEDEN

**"IT BUILDS TO AN
INEFFABLE BEAUTY**

so sublime that you might have a hard
time remembering what it is that other
films are even trying to accomplish!"

- David Ehrlich, *Time Out New York*

**★★★★★
GLORIOUS.**

What a bold, beguiling and utterly unclassifiable
director Andersson is. He thinks life is a comedy and feels
it's a tragedy, and is able to wrestle these conflicting
impulses into a gorgeous, deadpan deadlock."

- Xan Brooks, *The Guardian*

**"IT'S BEAUTIFUL
AND HAUNTING.**

Once you've seen Roy Andersson's
work you'll almost assuredly be
converted to his sensibility!"

- David Fear, *Rolling Stone*

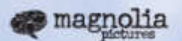


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A PIGEON SAT ON A BRANCH REFLECTING ON EXISTENCE

A FILM BY ROY ANDERSSON

DIRECTOR OF YOU THE LIVING AND SONGS FROM THE SECOND FLOOR



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
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"RIGOROUS AND ENGROSSING.

It scrutinizes the Afghanistan conflict with consummate sensitivity and detail.
Beautifully acted across the board, *A WAR* serves as a particularly gutsy
showcase for Pilou Asbaek."

- GUY LODGE, *VARIETY*

"TREMENDOUS. BEAUTIFULLY WRITTEN.

The sense of directorial sureness throughout can't be overstated,
Lindholm navigates with complete confidence."

JESSICA KIANG, *INDIEWIRE/THE PLAYLIST*

A WAR

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY TOBIAS LINDHOLM

DIRECTOR OF *A HIJACKING*
& CO-WRITER OF *THE HUNT* AND *BORGEN*

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Thursday, Dec. 10, 7:30pm, ArcLight Sherman Oaks

*Q&A with Tobias Lindholm to follow.
15301 Ventura Blvd, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

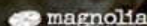
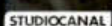
Friday, Dec. 11, 3pm, WME Screening Room

*Q&A with Tobias Lindholm and reception to follow. Parking is complimentary.
9601 Wilshire Blvd. Beverly Hills CA 90210

Sunday, Dec. 13, 2pm, Wilshire Screening Room

*Q&A with Tobias Lindholm to follow.
8670 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills CA 90211

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About Town

HOLLYWOOD HITS THE RED CARPET

A Very Murray Christmas

New York, Dec. 2



1



2

3



From left: Francis Ford Coppola and his daughter, director-writer-executive producer Sofia Coppola, were joined by the holiday musical-comedy special's music director, Paul Shaffer, at the afterparty at The Carlyle hotel.



1 Jake Paltrow (left) and Jason Schwartzman, who co-stars in the Netflix holiday movie released Dec. 4.

2 From left: Bill Murray, the film's Jenny Lewis and Netflix chief content officer Ted Sarandos. Said Murray: "Everyone did

better than anybody thought they could, including themselves."

3 EP Roman Coppola and wife Jennifer Furches.

4 The film's Miley Cyrus sang "Silent Night" and "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)."



4



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3

TrevorLIVE

Hollywood, Dec. 6

1 From left: director Adam Shankman, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, HBO's Michael Lombardo and Abbe Land, CEO of The Trevor Project, a youth suicide-prevention group. Louis-Dreyfus presented the Hero Award to Lombardo.

2 Andy Bird (with presenter Amy Adams), chairman of Walt Disney International, who accepted the Visionary Award on behalf of The Walt Disney Co.

3 Sarah Silverman hit the carpet at the Hollywood Palladium.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

BEST ORIGINAL SONG

The Light That Never Fails

Written by Adrian Gurvitz, Lauren Christy and Andra Day

Performed by Andra Day

The New York Times
Critics' Pick

**"BLINDINGLY BEAUTIFUL AND
METICULOUSLY ASSEMBLED."**

—JEANNETTE CATSOULIS

"TERRIFYING YET BEAUTIFUL."

—MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN, THE WASHINGTON POST

★★★★ **"BREATHTAKING."**

—TOM KEOGH, THE SEATTLE TIMES

"SPECTACULAR! *MERU* WILL OPEN YOUR EYES."

—KENNETH TURAN, LOS ANGELES TIMES

"ONE OF THE BEST DOCUMENTARIES OF 2015."

—NEWSWEEK

"VISUALLY SUBLIME AND DRAMATICALLY LOADED."

—PETER KEOUGH, THE BOSTON GLOBE

**"THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST OUTSTANDING
DOCUMENTARIES OF THE YEAR."**

—RICHARD ROEPER, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

MERU

BELIEVE IN THE IMPOSSIBLE

A FILM BY JIMMY CHIN AND ELIZABETH CHAI VASARHELYI



MUSIC
BOX
FILMS

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About Town

RAMBLING REPORTER *By Chris Gardner & Seth Abramovitch*



Melissa Rivers as her mother in *Joy*.

Melissa Rivers on Playing Her Mother in *Joy*

David O. Russell brings back his actor A-team in *Joy*, but for the biopic about Miracle Mop creator **Joy Mangano**, he added a face sure to elicit double takes when the film opens Christmas Day. **Melissa Rivers** plays her mother, the late **Joan Rivers**, opposite **Jennifer Lawrence** and **Bradley**

Cooper in scenes depicting her QVC days. In her first interview about the role, Melissa tells *THR* she was “terrified” her first day on the Boston set, stepping into an “emotionally risky” role six months after her mother’s death from a throat procedure at Manhattan’s Yorkville Endoscopy Center.

“Honestly, once the wig was on, I stopped looking in a mirror — it was too bizarre,” says Melissa, who also worked with a dialect coach to nail Joan’s speech patterns. “I didn’t want it to be a caricature. Like, I didn’t want anyone to say, ‘Oh look, it’s a drag queen.’ That was my biggest fear.” Melissa now has a perspective that could have come from Joan’s mouth: “I can say that I’m in a David O. Russell movie! How f—ing



cool is that? I might even give myself the moniker of his ‘new muse.’ ”

Star Wars’ Veil of Secrecy Covers Bad Robot Building

Sources say some visitors to **J.J. Abrams**’ Bad Robot offices in Santa Monica are being made to sign nondisclosure agreements in case they overhear anything *Force Awakens*-related (even for non-*Star Wars* meetings). Abrams neither confirms nor denies the NDAs to *THR* (“That might be true ...”) but does joke that they are pushed on anyone who looks “suspicious.” He coyly adds: “But I’ve never had to sign an NDA at Bad Robot.” He’s clear when it comes to how he will feel after the film’s premiere. “It’s been exhausting not being able to talk about it, which is why



Scientology’s Elfman

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—Michael Phillips, CHICAGO TRIBUNE

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RE-DEFINES THE HOLOCAUST-DRAMA GENRE,
INFUSING IT WITH NEW URGENCY,
VISUAL ENERGY AND MORAL MEANING.”**

—Ann Hornaday, THE WASHINGTON POST

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when a friend or someone in my family has seen the movie, it's such a release to be able to ask specific questions and try to make this thing better."

Legoland Donates Funds to Scientology Charity

It's hard to say what Legoland was thinking when it invited **Jenna Elfman** — one of Hollywood's most outspoken Scientologists — to light the Carlsbad, Calif., amusement park's 30-foot-tall Christmas tree Nov. 30. The next day, the park tweeted that it had donated \$10,000 at the *Dharma & Greg* star's request to Youth for Human Rights. Watchdog groups quickly accused the charity of being a Scientology front that focuses on youth recruitment. Legoland spokeswoman **Julie Estrada** tells *THR*, "We invite our tree-lighting guests without

prejudice and provide a small donation to their charity of choice in appreciation of their participation." Reps for Elfman and the Church of Scientology did not respond to requests for comment.

What to Do When a Bad Film Follows You Around

For the holidays, Hollywood heads to places like the newly renovated Sun Valley Resort in Idaho. **Arnold Schwarzenegger** was spotted hitting the slopes on Bald Mountain when a guest noted that his *Jingle All the Way* — panned by critics in 1996 with a dismal 17 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes — was on TV the night before at the hotel (where, coincidentally, co-star **Rita Wilson** also was staying with **Tom Hanks**, **Colin Hanks** and the rest of the clan). Schwarzenegger replied jovially: "I know! I watched a little bit of it!" **THR**

Power Dining

Tom Rothman broke bread with his former Fox colleague, Paramount exec vp **Peter Kang**, at Akasha. ... **Bryan Lourd** and **Jeffrey Katzenberg** rendezvoused at The Palm. On another day, **Stacey Snider** ate with *Hunger Games* director **Francis Lawrence** the week after the premiere of *Mockingjay* — Part 2, while **Larry King** and **Jim Berkus** each sat nearby. ... **Ari Emanuel**, **Rob Reiner** and **Al Michaels** were in at once at Toscana, then on another day **John Burnham** met with **Roy Price** while **Peter Morton** and **Steven Bochco** shared the room. ... Recent arrivals at Bouchon: **Brian Grazer**, UTA's **Louise Ward**, **Adam Goodman**, producer **Carla Hacken** and **Gavin Rossdale**. ... **Emma Watson** queued up at Go Get Em Tiger. ... **Kiefer Sutherland** and **Jussie Smollett** popped in to Caulfield's at the same time. ... **Taye Diggs** took a seat at Sycamore Kitchen. ... **Jennifer Love Hewitt** dropped by The Hungry Cat. ... While at Art Basel Miami Beach, **Owen Wilson** checked out Cantina La Veinte.



Lawrence



HOT NEW RESTAURANT LITTLE PINE

The Quick Pitch Moby has opened a (what else?) vegan restaurant in (where else?) Silver Lake focused on Cal-Med cuisine in a cozily spare, freestanding art deco building. Along with a welter of salads (pick the faro walnut studded with pomegranate seeds), there's an array of share-oriented plates: brussels sprouts coated in an apple cider gastrique, wild mushroom bruschetta, a trio of stuffed shells with house-made "cheeses."

The Inside Dish Moby has decreed that his music never be played in the resto because, as he put it to a local blog, "that would be weird." 2870 Rowena Ave. — GARY BAUM

Got tips? email RAMBLING@THR.COM.

www.thr.com | THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER | 39

"GRIPPING, BEAUTIFULLY EXECUTED. SO WELL WRITTEN AND ACTED THAT IT CONVEYS A CONVINCING ILLUSION OF VERACITY."

CATE BLANCHETT IN ONE OF HER GREATEST SCREEN PERFORMANCES!

—Stephen Holden, THE NEW YORK TIMES

"BLANCHETT IS ELECTRIFYING. SHE TRANSFORMS FROM A WELL-COIFED CAREER WOMAN INTO A WALKING RUIN!"

—Rafer Guzman, NEWSDAY

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About Town

HITCHED, HATCHED, HIRED



Campos and Subercaseaux (in Jenny Packham).

CAMPOS & SUBERCASEAUX

Antonio Campos, a co-founder of New York-based production company Borderline Films, married film editor **Sofia Subercaseaux** on Nov. 28 in Zapallar, Chile, in front of 200 guests. The couple became engaged in February.

HITCHED, HATCHED, HIRED

Inside the industry's celebrations and news

WEDDINGS

Lauren Camp, co-founder and principal of PR firm The Brand House, married financier Peter Campbell on Oct. 10 at Ojai Valley Inn & Spa in Ojai, Calif., in front of 150 guests.

ENGAGEMENTS

Adam Griffin, manager and partner at Link Entertainment, became engaged to **Kacie Higginbotham**, senior manager



Griffin and Higginbotham

of marketing at Inspire Energy, on Nov. 23 at the Hotel Erwin rooftop bar in Venice.

BIRTHS

Kim Kardashian and **Kanye West** welcomed son Saint West on Dec. 5 at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.



Jack Anthony Vernon

Natalie Bruss, vp digital strategy at the PR firm ID, and husband **Chris Bruss**, president of digital content at Funny Or Die, welcomed son Jack Anthony Vernon Bruss on Nov. 18 at Cedars-Sinai.

CONGRATS

NBCUniversal's Content Innovation Agency appointed **John Harrobin** chief marketing officer Dec. 2.

Rogers & Cowan tapped **Alan Nierob** and **Fran Curtis** as co-presidents of entertainment worldwide Dec. 1.

AMC Networks appointed **Valerie Cabrera** senior vp distribution and **Melissa Landau** senior vp business affairs Dec. 1.

WME tapped Warner Bros. TV veteran **Dan Limerick** as head of TV business affairs Dec. 7, and WBTV appointed **Adam Glick** to replace him.

Indigenous Media tapped **Ben Fast** as executive vp

development and **Maira Nevarez** as executive vp finance and operations Dec. 3.

Focus Features promoted **Rebecca Arzoian** to director of development Dec. 3.

Children's Hospital Los Angeles renamed its emergency transport program for pilot **Alan Purwin**, 54, who died Sept. 11 in Colombia in a plane crash during filming of the Tom Cruise movie *Mena*. Purwin provided the hospital pro bono helicopter service.

DEATHS

Scott Weiland, former frontman of the rock bands Stone Temple Pilots and Velvet Revolver, was found dead on his tour bus in Minnesota on Dec. 3. He was 48.

Martin E. Brooks, best known for his portrayal of scientist Rudy Wells on the 1970s ABC series *The Six Million Dollar Man*, died Dec. 7 in Studio City. He was 90.

William C. Gerrity, an assistant director who took to New York's streets to work on the 1960s ABC series *Naked City* and the 1971 Oscar-winning film *The French Connection*, died Nov. 15. He was 86.

Robert Loggia, whose portrayal of a seedy detective in 1985's *Jagged Edge* earned him an Oscar nomination, died Dec. 4 in Los Angeles after a battle with Alzheimer's disease. He was 85.



Loggia in 1988's *Big*.

TRIBUTE

HOWARD WEST

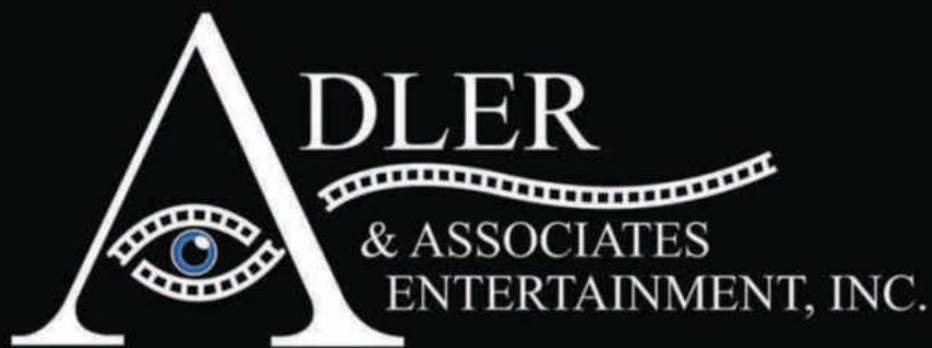
1931-2015

The *Seinfeld* exec producer, who died Dec. 3 of a stroke, is remembered by George Shapiro, his Shapiro/West business partner and best friend of 76 years



West (left) and Shapiro in 2004.

WE WERE BEST FRIENDS and partners since we were 8. We went to the movies every Saturday and chipped in to buy a 1940 Olds called the Cream Puff. It needed a lot of work. We also were roommates and had an incredible time as bachelors in New York in our 20s. The only time we were separated was in the Army during the Korean War. When we came out, I got a job at William Morris, and once I got established in L.A., I got Howie a job there — and soon he was running the TV department. I left in 1974 to start my own business and asked him to join me. He said, "I wouldn't do this with anyone but you." We met **Jerry Seinfeld** in 1980 and loved him right away. Howard was very involved in the negotiations of Jerry's deal with NBC for *Seinfeld* and our deal as exec producers. We recently had a stimulating meeting at Sony, and Howard was at the top of his game. Jerry said there's nothing better than going out doing what you love — Howard was doing what he loved. It's not going to be easy to replace the acumen Howard had, so we just framed a little picture in our office with the words, "What Would Howard Do?" — AS TOLD TO REBECCA SUN



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OSCARS



"Films by the world, for the world."

"We don't want to just re-create a traditional movie studio," says Zhang, photographed Nov. 13 in Alibaba Pictures' offices in Beijing.

PRESIDENT,
ALIBABA PICTURES

Zhang Wei

In her first interview since becoming Jack Ma's top global film exec she reveals what China's web giant can offer Hollywood (and it's not just Superman sheets)

By Patrick Brzeski

ALTHOUGH HER STUDIO HAS YET TO release a single film, and her name remains unfamiliar to most in the industry, Alibaba Pictures president Zhang Wei arguably is the most powerful woman in Chinese entertainment. Shortly after Alibaba Group founder and executive chairman Jack Ma took his Chinese e-commerce behemoth public in September 2014 — raising a historic \$25 billion on the New York Stock Exchange — he handpicked Zhang to become the chief international strategist and outward face of his ambitious new film endeavor. Ma's expansion into film is part of a rapidly growing entertainment empire that spans mobile movie ticketing services, cinema distribution tech, minority stakes in top local movie studios Huayi Brothers and Le Vision, the Netflix-like streaming video service Tmall Box Office, a multiyear movie licensing deal with NBCUniversal, a partnership with Paramount as the "official promotional partner in China" for *Mission: Impossible — Rogue Nation* and plans to fully acquire leading online video site Youku Tudou for \$4.8 billion. The job is a logical move for Zhang, whose connection to Chinese entertainment stretches back to her childhood.



In junior high school in Beijing, she won a competition to star in a weekly kids talk show called *Our Generation*, which she hosted throughout high school. Later, after graduating from Seton Hill University in Pennsylvania and earning an MBA from Harvard Business School, she returned to China in 1999 as host of CCTV's groundbreaking business show *Dialogue* — the first local talk show to introduce Fortune 500 business leaders to the Chinese audience — interviewing CEOs such as Jeffrey Immelt, Larry Ellison and Sumner Redstone. While the Western press suggested she harbored ambitions to become the "Oprah of China," Zhang, who lives in Beijing with her husband and 2-year-old son, scoffs at the notion, saying the show merely was a hobby while she advanced her core pursuit of becoming a business leader.

In a pair of firsts for Zhang — "this is our first week in this office and my first interview in this job" — *THR* met with the busy exec in Beijing to discuss how she plans to follow through on Ma's promise to turn Alibaba into "the biggest entertainment company in the world."

← Zhang's new office in Beijing includes the mascot for UCWeb, the maker of China's most popular mobile browser, which is owned by Alibaba.

Is there a U.S. studio that you have set as a benchmark for Alibaba Pictures?

I don't think we're like anyone else. What makes us different is that we're new, of course, but also that we come at the industry from a different angle. We have a lot of Internet DNA in our genes, and that's what makes us unique in this space. Our goal is to bring additional value to the table so that we can fuel the growth of the film industry here in China. And that involves leveraging the resources in our ecosystem — the brainpower and all of the things we have built. With that, we understand that you can't just get in on one piece. So that's why we're getting into the content creation business and why we're also engaged in content marketing and the online and offline distribution business. Our acquisition of [online video site] Youku Tudou sort of completes the online distribution picture for delivering content to users.

What kind of value can Alibaba offer to your Hollywood partners?

I went to talk to all of the studios, and the first thing everyone wonders is what an e-commerce company can actually do for them. There are a few things. One, if you think about the past, one of the biggest disconnects the studios face is that they never really know, in a detailed, comprehensive way, who is coming to see their

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JOHNNY DEPP

DESERT PALM ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, ACTOR
(BLACK MASS/WARNER BROS.)



SAOIRSE RONAN

INTERNATIONAL STAR AWARD, ACTRESS
(BROOKLYN / FOX SEARCHLIGHT)



MICHAEL FASSBENDER

INTERNATIONAL STAR AWARD, ACTOR
(STEVE JOBS/UNIVERSAL PICTURES)



CATE BLANCHETT

DESERT PALM ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, ACTRESS
(TRUTH/SONY PICTURES CLASSICS,
CAROL/THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY)



TOM MCCARTHY

SONNY BONO VISIONARY AWARD
(OPEN ROAD FILMS)



BRIE LARSON

BREAKTHROUGH PERFORMANCE AWARD
(ROOM / A24)

PAST HONOREES INCLUDE:



DAVID OYELOWO



ROSAMUND PIKE



EDDIE REDMAYNE



ROBERT DUVALL



HELEN MIRREN



TOM HANKS



SANDRA BULLOCK



MERYL STREEP

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movies. Even the filmmakers would probably like to know this — how old are they, where are they from, do they have kids, what are their other interests, what's their living situation, what type of people are they? We talk about demand-driven entertainment. Bringing the Internet deeper into the entertainment business is the best way to solve that puzzle.

Initially there was some skepticism within the investor community about Alibaba's pivot toward entertainment — that these investments were somehow window dressing or a diversion from the core e-commerce business.

I think this year's Singles Day [China's version of Black Friday] clearly demonstrated how the businesses complement one another. The first step was to create this Singles Day shopping event. This year's Gala added a huge celebration and entertainment experience leading up to the door opening of the Singles Day online sale. On top of countless Chinese stars, we had pieces featuring Kevin Spacey in character as Frank Underwood from *House of Cards*, and Daniel Craig promoting *Spectre*. I worked on these pieces. The way I explain it to people is, think of Black Friday and the way people line up waiting to get into the shops. Well, instead of just waiting, we're having a giant party on the street outside Macy's, and Daniel Craig and Kevin Spacey are there. Then the door opens, and we all go shopping. Blending shopping and entertainment — it's a brilliant idea. (Alibaba racked up \$5 billion in sales in the first 90 minutes of Singles Day.)

How do Alibaba's e-commerce assets benefit Alibaba Pictures' entertainment interests — and Hollywood partners?

Merchandising is a big piece. In the U.S., theatrical makes up maybe 30 to 40 percent of revenue. In China, theatrical is the majority by far. There's so much value that has not been developed yet in the merchandising space. We believe we have a unique advantage here. We have close to 10 million sellers on our e-commerce platform. Collectively, they can make anything you can imagine. And it's a one-stop service, from design, manufacturing, logistics to customer service — all the ways to deliver to our hundreds of millions of users. The one challenge our sellers face on our platform is how to market their products and how to differentiate themselves. A bed sheet is a bed sheet until you put Superman on it, and then it becomes something entirely different to a little kid. Associating great products with great IP is a natural way forward.



1. "This is a drawing that some of the participants and I made at Alibaba's Global Conference on Women and Entrepreneurship," Zhang says.
2. Tao Dolls, the mascot of Alibaba Group's online shopping websites.

From the Hollywood side, there's apt to be a real concern about quality control if using high-value IP. We have a credit system for all our sellers on our system. Through our knowledge of our sellers, we can select the most qualified producers in any category. For example, for *Mission: Impossible — Rogue Nation*, we came up with about 30 products, but we worked closely with Paramount's merchandising team, sending them designs and samples throughout the whole process. We showed many directly to Tom Cruise as well, to make sure he was OK with how they represented the *Mission: Impossible* brand. This is our value: connecting both parties. In the past, how does a backpack maker in Zhejiang province connect with Paramount and Tom Cruise in such an efficient and reliable way? It was just impossible.

The true Hollywood-China co-production movie — at least in terms of content — is a very tricky equation. No one has really hit it yet.

Early on you have to identify who your core audience is. For some co-production projects, most of the audience is here in China. It should be a local-language film for China. The market can support that. We can't dream that every Chinese movie will travel around the world. We have to be realistic. ... We're also actively working with IP holders around the world to acquire rights to stories that have a fan base both here in China and internationally — for co-productions with global appeal. There are a lot of common values that China shares with the world, so there should be plenty to focus on. It's going to happen, and when it does, it will happen naturally. We can't force it.

Jack Ma is known for creating opportunities for women in his businesses. What's it like for female executives in China and at Alibaba?

At the top level, we are one of very few companies that has lots of female leaders. But in general, in China most women work. It's not like other Asian countries where many women stay in the domestic sphere. Chairman Mao said women lift half of the sky. Jack always jokes that Alibaba owes all its success to women. Why? Because so many of our online consumers are female. But that's just on the consumer side; Alibaba also has the highest ratio of female executives of any major tech company. Fifty percent of our full workforce is female, which is already exceptionally rare for a tech company. I've been with the company for seven and a half years, and I've yet to feel any kind of glass ceiling.

When you and Ma made your first trip to Hollywood, there was a lot of excitement surrounding the Los Angeles office you were launching. But now it seems you're spending more time in Beijing.

Well, we've opened our office there, but I'm on a plane all the time. Last month I was in China, Tokyo, London and L.A. Our international team has an office in L.A., which I'm managing, but my international team here in China is actually bigger. The L.A. team is developing the relationships with the studios and talent, but most of the execution is done here in China.

How do you unwind? Do you have any free time?

I used to watch movies to unwind, but I suppose that's sort of become one of my professional responsibilities as a film executive. But one of my biggest private passions is scuba diving. I like to say that being under the water is the closest you can get to having an outer-space experience on planet Earth. In the ocean you feel so small, and there are so many profound unknowns. You can feel how massive the universe really is. All of the little concerns and worries that entangle us in our daily lives drift away. You can truly focus. So that's where I turn off and let myself go — under water. (Laughs.) I just wish I had more time to do that. **TJR**



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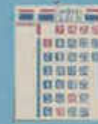
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A Time Warner Spinoff of HBO? Why Bewkes Must Just Say No

Sure, the company's \$30 billion crown jewel might rival Netflix on its own, but that's the reason to keep it, not sell, despite the digital cheerleaders By Michael Wolff

RECENTLY, *THE NEW YORKER*, WHICH considers itself an arbiter of media business reputations and metatrends, suggested Time Warner should spin off HBO. This then became the focus of a theory for deconstructing the fate of dinosaur media conglomerates: a Superman analysis in which coveted assets blast off from a doomed planet Krypton.

In a spinoff, a new public company is carved out of an existing entity, with shareholders of the original now owning shares in this new company. *New Yorker* financial columnist James Surowiecki theorizes that HBO is undervalued within Time Warner and that CEO Jeff Bewkes could realize HBO's full purported \$30 billion worth in a spinoff. Similarly, Surowiecki says, Disney should have spun off its choicest asset, ESPN, in 2014, before it began losing subscribers: "It's hard to argue that Disney wouldn't have been better off banking \$50 billion in 2014."

The first and critical flaw in this argument is the misunderstanding that, in a spinoff, the company doing the spin gets the money. In fact, all value goes to its shareholders. The originating company doesn't bank anything (and Disney actually shares ownership of ESPN with Hearst, complicating any spin-out plan). It might be true that a spinoff of HBO would be good for HBO shareholders, but it is much harder

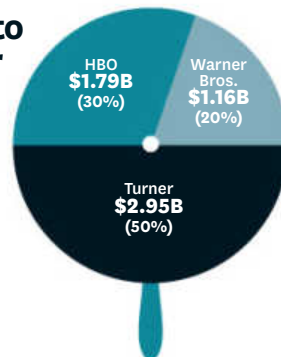
to argue how this would be good for Time Warner shareholders deprived of both the value and the leverage of one of its key assets. Hence, in Surowiecki's scenario, the HBO side might go up, while the Time Warner side might go down, meaning nobody would make anything, but rather lose millions in the cost of such a deal.

The column is premised on the pro-digital-media assertion by the analyst Richard Greenfield that, "The way people watch TV really is changing dramatically. And no traditional media company is doing a good job of dealing with it." This in itself would cause immediate eye-rolling on the part of most executives at traditional media companies, because Greenfield is the analyst who is constantly quoted on the subject of TV's transformation and of the industry's inability to adapt.

Surowiecki and Greenfield's point is about

HBO's Value to Time Warner

Of Time Warner's three operating divisions, HBO has been perhaps the steadiest contributor to the bottom line, though it significantly lags Turner Broadcasting System, a less consistent asset that includes TNT, TBS, Cartoon Network, TCM and more. The divisions reported a combined \$5.9 billion in operating income in 2014.



cord-cutting, a Greenfield-promoted anxiety that contributed to the drop in television stocks this summer and fall. It's the tech position: TV viewers — well, younger ones anyway — are fleeing to digital distribution platforms. Traditional television sees the flight as an expansion of the TV universe: more people watching more content that the industry owns, if not, per se, more television.

Curiously, the success of HBO — which, independently constituted, Surowiecki seems to suggest, could be a supercharged Netflix — now is dependent on the cord-connected universe. HBO makes a profit of \$2 billion a year, whereas Netflix, with similar revenue and costs, makes hardly anything. A key difference is that HBO subscriptions are sold in cable packages, whereas Netflix bears the cost of its own sales. Part of HBO's strength in creating favorable deals for itself is the complex leverage it has with cable operators because of its relationship to Time Warner's Turner cable channels. Similarly, the Turner channels would suffer without HBO, even as HBO's leaders have begun to chart a digital-only path with the HBO Now service, available without a cable subscription.

It is true that Time Warner is the spinoff king. It divested itself of virtually all of its low-growth assets during the past decade. First its music division, then its cable system, then AOL, then its publishing group — all gone. This strategy has doubled down on cable television's extraordinary gains in profitability. Such growth recently has slowed, arguably not because consumers are less interested in television but because of the technology businesses' efforts to compete for a place in the ever-more-lucrative video marketplace. It's not a weak market, but, increasingly, a war for dominance in a strong market. (In this, Time Warner, like other traditional media companies, arguably holds a content currency that digital competitors will increasingly bid up.)

The *New Yorker* piece might reasonably be read as another variation of the tech echo-chamber PR campaign to favorably position its digital platforms, still offering low returns, against traditional ones. "HBO looks set to thrive in a cord-cutting world; Time Warner's cable networks are more likely to struggle," says Surowiecki, adopting the tech industry view without offering details.

Even if he is correct in identifying HBO as a notable survivor in the television wars and Time Warner's other yet-highly profitable assets are on their way to tanking, the argument would be backward: Time Warner ought then to spin off everything else and keep HBO. If HBO is such a great business, then the folks at Time Warner who have so successfully managed it — Bewkes once ran HBO — ought to keep doing just that. **TNR**

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It's *Rocky* Redux as *Creed* Looks to Go the Distance

Nearly 40 years ago, Sylvester Stallone upended the Oscar race with his classic. Ryan Coogler and Michael B. Jordan now are trying for a repeat

By Gregg Kilday

IT'S ALMOST DEJA VU ALL OVER AGAIN. Thirty-nine years ago a little boxing picture called *Rocky* arrived seemingly out of nowhere. Its star, Sylvester Stallone, was a virtual unknown, but the 1976 movie, made for just over \$1 million, collected \$225 million worldwide to become that year's top-grossing film. Even more significantly, its tale of a triumphant underdog struck a nerve — with both the general public and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. *Rocky* was nominated for 10 Oscars and won three, including best picture, besting competitors *Taxi Driver*, *Network* and *All the President's Men*.

Nearly 40 years later, *Creed*, the seventh movie in the *Rocky* franchise, appears to be riding a similar wave. The \$35 million movie, which MGM produced in association with Warner Bros.' New Line unit, grossed \$64.6 million in its first two weekends. And it appears to be catching a cultural wave of its own. While the movie barely figured in most of the awards-season handicappers' early prognostications, Stallone — who takes a secondary role in the new film as he coaches Michael B. Jordan's Adonis Johnson, the son of Rocky's old rival and later friend Apollo Creed (Carl Weathers) — suddenly has emerged as a real supporting actor contender. And the buzz is building for the smart way that director Ryan Coogler, who wrote the film's adapted screenplay along with Aaron Covington, has reshaped the franchise to speak to a new, multicultural generation.

Back in the '70s, the first *Rocky* snuck up on folks. Producer Irwin Winkler recalls standing outside a small theater in New York when the film first opened and being handed a *New York Times* in which critic Vincent Canby panned the movie. "I was shaken," he remembers, "but then Peter Falk comes out of the theater and says, 'Congratulations.' I said, 'But look at the terrible reviews.' He said, 'Irwin, go inside. The audience is cheering!'"

This time, the word from *The New York Times* was a lot more encouraging. In one of the first signs that the new film could go the distance, A.O. Scott described a critics' screening at



which, when composer Bill Conti's familiar *Rocky* theme song finally played, "the audience burst into spontaneous applause." Winkler wasn't surprised since, he says, there had been a couple of test screenings in September "that went through the roof." Still, *Creed* flew under the radar. "We didn't want to spend time going off to film festivals and not finishing the movie right," he says.

Meanwhile, Warner Bros., which was busy trumpeting such movies as *Black Mass* and *Mad Max: Fury Road*, hadn't yet pushed *Creed* to the fore, but insiders insist a plan always was in place that took its cues from the strategy the studio followed with 2006's Oscar-winning *The Departed*, which proved itself first at the box office before making its awards bid. And, over the past few weeks, the studio has begun sending out screeners and is planning an Academy screening with the filmmakers on Dec. 23.

So far reactions are enthusiastic. Ava DuVernay led a series of tweets with "My admiration for Ryan Coogler and @creedmovie is so massive, I don't know where to begin." In a tweet

of his own, writer-director Phil Lord added, "In a great year for movies, I think *Creed* may be the most important."

Before successful Oscar campaigns were expected to have winning narratives, the original movie succeeded because everyone knew that the young Stallone had gambled all, agreeing to sell the script only if he was allowed to star. Coogler, who burst on the scene with his 2013 indie *Fruitvale Station*, in which Jordan also starred, tells an equally compelling story of bonding with his father over repeat screenings of *Rocky II* and then convincing Stallone he'd do justice to the *Rocky* legacy.

Then there's that zeitgeist question. "Forty years ago we'd been through Vietnam, Watergate, and along came this movie that said, 'If you can believe in yourself, you'll be OK,'" says Winkler. "Now, amid all the talk of race relations, here comes a film about a white, middle-class pug who basically becomes a father figure to a young African-American male. We want to believe that that's possible and that America can come together." **THR**



He Coulda Been a Contender

IN MAY, AT THE CANNES Film Festival, Harvey Weinstein told reporters that Jake Gyllenhaal should have gotten an Oscar nomination for 2014's *Nightcrawler*, but "we'll get our revenge,"

since, he promised, the actor's performance as a down-on-his-luck boxer in Antoine Fuqua's *Southpaw* would be a showstopper. But then the Weinstein Co. gave the film a July release, well in advance of awards season. While *Southpaw* took in \$90 million worldwide, it scored just a 60 percent approval

on Rotten Tomatoes. Weinstein now says the film has been "stigmatized" by its release date and, as a result, has not taken as seriously as it should have been. So Gyllenhaal will need a boost from either a SAG or a Golden Globe nomination if he hopes to have another match back in the Oscar ring. — G.K.

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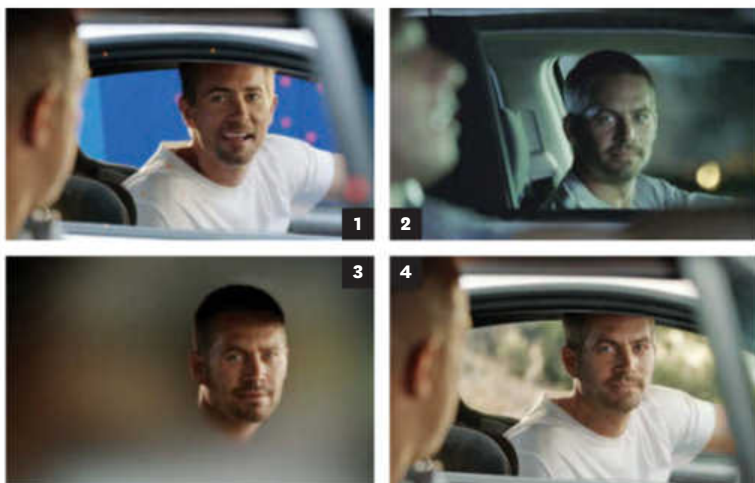




VISUAL EFFECTS

Reanimating Paul Walker

The actor's 2013 death didn't kill his *Furious 7* character — VFX artists, with the help of his two brothers, created 350 shots to keep him on the screen By Carolyn Giardina



The general process: 1. Caleb Walker performs the scene. 2. Unused footage of Paul Walker in a similar shot, filmed at night. 3. Weta adjusts the lighting. 4. Caleb's head is replaced with Paul's in the final shot.

IN THE PRE-DIGITAL ERA, Paul Walker's death on Nov. 30, 2013, would have made finishing a movie like *Furious 7* a daunting task without considering recasting and reshoots. But digital filmmaking has changed all that. While Universal was mum about how Walker's scenes were completed when the movie, which grossed \$1.7 billion worldwide, was released in April, VFX supervisor Joe Letteri, from Peter Jackson's Weta Digital, now explains to *THR* how they did it.

At first, he says, "we thought at most we could get one scene of a digital Paul that maybe had some dialogue in it, and we'd have to find other ways to finish the story." But then Walker's two brothers, Caleb and Cody, who are of similar size and stature, stepped forward and "allowed us to scan them and work with them in the scenes. It gave us something as close to Paul as we could hope for. The scope of the work bloomed so we could tell the story and finish the character arc."

In the end, roughly 260 shots — like those following the car jump between Abu Dhabi's Etihad Towers — involved performances by one of the two brothers, whose faces were replaced by CG versions of Paul's. In other scenes,

a third actor, John Brotherton, also stood in for Paul.

An additional 90 or so shots used outtakes or older footage of Walker that was relit and repurposed — such as the shots of Walker driving in a car alongside Vin Diesel in the film's closing moments.

To create the CG head replacement, Weta started by scanning the brothers as the closest reference. "Then we used Paul's footage for the final touch-up to his model" to capture details like skin textures, says Letteri. To animate the simulated performance, the VFX vet says "we used a lot of Paul's footage as reference, because as close as the brothers were in style and mannerisms, they just weren't Paul when Paul played his character. We really tried to limit our interpretation of the character to things that we had seen Paul do as the character."

A third element that had to be added was dialogue, with sound editors crafting a vocal performance out of previous dialogue the actor had recorded.

Finally, small details were added — from the stubble on his cheek to small changes around the corners of his mouth "because when that was off, it didn't feel like Paul." **THR**

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GALACTIC GEMS

It's *Star Wars* meets red-carpet dazzle, as celestial-inspired diamond jewelry arrives with a glittery force this awards season

By Carol McColgin

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"I wanted to bring back great quality tennis to L.A., along with a bit of fun," says Sharapova (left) of her upcoming tournament. She was photographed with Handler on Oct. 13 at UCLA's Los Angeles Tennis Center.

TENNIS IS ENJOYING A SLAMMING resurgence of late. September's U.S. Open on ESPN was its most viewed in four years. Tennis Channel ratings are up 24 percent this year, and there are three planned projects about the "Battle of the Sexes" match between **Billie Jean King** and **Bobby Riggs** (**Emma Stone** and **Steve Carell** will play the duo in one version). And more and more Hollywood athletic types are being lured by the sport's physical, mental and social aspects.

"There are two things I am crazy about: tennis and Spanish," says **Chelsea Handler**. She plays three to four times a week on private courts or at the Riviera Country Club — plus at her house in Majorca, where she plays on clay. She also is scheduled to play celebrity doubles at her pal **Maria Sharapova's** inaugural Los Angeles tournament, *Maria Sharapova + Friends*, on Dec. 12-13 at UCLA's L.A. Tennis Center. The event brings together former tennis champs and members of the local entertainment community.

"Today everyone is time-starved and information overloaded, but tennis is a sport you can play in a short period of time," says Tennis Channel chairman and CEO **Ken Solomon**. "It's just a different way of having lunch." On the court, "business organically intrudes," says Brillstein Entertainment Partners CEO **Jon Liebman**. "It's a good way to knock a guy off in the middle of a match."

But you have to be preternaturally fit to play often and well. "I train hard; I've been at it for 12 years," says actress **Elisabeth Shue**, who sometimes plays with other biz folks, such as director **Fredrik Bond**. "I played bad tennis with my brothers growing up. It's the performance sport for someone who has regressed childhood issues. And it keeps me in shape and sane."

Tennis in L.A. has a long Hollywood legacy. **Charlie Chaplin** had private courts and played with fellow enthusiasts such as **Groucho Marx** and *Trainwreck* actor **Norman Lloyd**, who still picks up a racquet at the age of 101. "The ground coverage is a problem, but my net game is still good," he says. In the late 1920s, Hollywood also would migrate to Palm Springs to the Racquet Club built by actors **Charles Farrell** and **Ralph Bellamy**.

And while the lore of tennis matches on the private courts of industry players (**Skip Brittenham**, **Robert Evans** and **Mike Medavoy**) abounds, many are getting back out to the clubs and public courts thanks to innovative tennis programs and "addictive" coaches. Here's a roundup of the L.A.-area clubs most frequented by today's era of entertainment industry players.

Beverly Hills Tennis Club

340 N. MAPLE DRIVE, BEVERLY HILLS
beverlyhillstennisclub.org

FOUNDED 1929

FEES \$20,000 initiation; families: \$400 per month

COURTS 5 hard courts

THE TENNIS CLUBS OF HOLLYWOOD

Swing's schwing is back! L.A. power players are picking up their racquets again as an ultracompetitive scene re-emerges, from exclusive enclaves to public parks, and everyone from Larry Ellison to Maria Sharapova is showing a little love By Sharon Swart

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Los Angeles Times

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JOHN POWERS *VOGUE*





WHO PLAYS Justin Timberlake, ICM Partners' Ted Chervin and Chris Silbermann, producers Tucker Tooley and Bill Block, CAA's Brian Kend, agent David Gersh

THE SCORE The members-owned downtown B.H. club consists of just five courts and a pool hidden behind a nondescript bricks-and-shrubs facade on Maple Drive. "I walked by the club 50 times before I realized it existed," says Tooley, who usually plays once a week. "It's low profile and very quiet." While the demographic is "ancient," according to some, the club's restaurant (breakfast and lunch only) is a popular meeting place because it's convenient to nearby offices, including UTA, yet it is never a scene. The courts recently were resurfaced, and the gym was refurbished in 2014.



Timberlake



Gersh



Block

Brentwood Country Club

590 S. BURLINGAME AVE., L.A.
brentwoodcc.net

FOUNDED 1941

FEES \$200,000 initiation (for the adjoining golf club), \$1,000 per month

COURTS 6 hard courts

WHO PLAYS Reese Witherspoon, Jamie Lee Curtis, Woody Harrelson, Denis Leary, Garry Shandling, Pam Shriver, Sony Pictures CEO Michael Lynton, producer Martin Shafer, Original Film's Neal Moritz and Ori Marmur, Echo Lake CEO Doug Mankoff



Witherspoon



Lynton



Curtis

THE SCORE To play tennis at Brentwood, you either have to fork over the hefty initiation to join the golf club or have benevolent friends who are members. Described as "very private" and "a strict, rules-oriented club," Brentwood is smaller than most L.A. clubs but has a "well-run tennis program," according to members. Director Jay Roach plays here often with industry friends, while manager Steve Lovett says his focus is more on his son's game lately, but he will play with his brother Richard monthly. WME's Cliff Roberts, who is a regular golfer, says, "There are periods where I take lessons here because I like to hit." Slotted into a residential area just south of San Vicente, the club's six courts are stacked 3 by 3 in between the driving range and the clubhouse.

Los Angeles Tennis Club

5851 CLINTON ST., HANCOCK PARK
latennisclub.com

FOUNDED 1920

FEES \$25,000 initiation; families: \$350 per month

COURTS 14 hard and 2 Har-Tru courts

WHO PLAYS Matt Bomer and Simon Halls, Anne Heche, FX original programming president Nick Grad, writer Jeff Rake, producers Cathy Schulman and Chris Bender, attorney Carlos Goodman

THE SCORE The first private-equity tennis club in the city, LATC has "an old-school Hollywood vibe," says Gotham Group manager Lindsay Williams. There's a relaxing upstairs bar, and the gym and pool recently have been upgraded. Goodman, like many of the members who live in the club's Hancock Park neighborhood, digs the club's proximity



Bomer



Halls



Grad

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851 Alma Real Drive, Pacific Palisades
(310) 573-1331; laparks.org
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Palisades is a busy eight-court facility where Hilary Swank and Diane Keaton are regulars, and Live Ball is the preferred state of play. "Palisades is the birthplace of Live Ball," says its inventor and Tennis Channel founder Steve Bellamy, who now is Kodak's president of motion picture and entertainment. Live Ball is a fast-paced doubles tennis game that rotates in a new set of players after the on-court challengers are beat. "There is a significant flight to organized play," adds Bellamy. "It melds well with people's busy schedules."

LA CIENEGA TENNIS CENTER

325 S. La Cienega Blvd., Beverly Hills
Reservations: (310) 285-6825 or beverlyhills.org/tennis
Hours: Mon.-Sun., 7 a.m.-10 p.m.
Fees: \$8-\$15/hour (depending on time and whether you're a B.H. resident)
There are 16 lighted outdoor hard courts here, 14 of which are situated above the facility's parking structure. Producer Sara Risher likes to come at sunset: "The courts are up high, so you have a great view." Kate Upton and Kit Harington also play here. Beverly Hills Tennis runs the teaching program, and also those at nearby public facilities Roxbury Park and Beverly Hills High School. Weekday evenings can get crowded, but weekends after 5 p.m. are easier for walk-ons.

LOS ANGELES TENNIS CENTER at UCLA

420 Charles E. Young Drive West, L.A.
Reservations: (310) 825-3671 (12-5 p.m., one day prior)
Hours: Mon.-Sun., dawn-11 p.m.
There are 20 tennis courts scattered across UCLA's campus in Westwood, but most of the hardcore play goes on here. The eight-court facility originally was built for the 1984 Olympics and has a 5,800-person stadium. It served as the venue for the L.A. Open, before the tournament moved to Bogota, Colombia, in 2012. Timothy Olyphant and Tommy Haas are regulars, as is Brillstein Entertainment Partners' Colton Gramm, who says it's free to play but finding a court can be "challenging." A reservation here requires a UCLA Recreation membership, which means you need to be a UCLA student or patron (a \$100 alumni association donation suffices); membership is \$58 month or \$480 year.

THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY

PART 2

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to home and “the number and quality of the courts — you can always play.” The club’s annual Independence Day party is a big draw, too. Halls (who used to play competitive tennis in his native Canada) and husband Bomer and their kids “spend every Fourth here,” says Halls. “L.A. has a tendency to be very industry focused, and this place is not. It’s a throwback to an old club in the Northeast.” But LATC actually has a rich SoCal tennis history: “For years the club was a mecca for major tournaments, with players like **Jimmy Connors**, **Ilie Nastase** and **Jack Kramer**,” says Solomon. More infamously, Billie Jean King played here as a youngster and was asked not to appear in a group photo because she was wearing shorts.

Malibu Racquet Club

23847 STUART RANCH ROAD, MALIBU
maliburacquetclub.com

FOUNDED 1974

FEES individual initiation: \$3,000, \$240 per month; family initiation: \$5,000, \$310 per month
COURTS 8 hard and 4 Har-Tru clay courts are being added on an adjacent 3-acre lot

WHO PLAYS Pierce Brosnan, Elisabeth Shue, John McEnroe, Tommy Haas, Tracy Austin, Lindsay Davenport, Victoria Azarenka, Timothy Olyphant

THE SCORE Purchased in 2007 by Oracle billionaire and Indian Wells Masters owner **Larry Ellison**, MRC’s Pacific views, Nobu-esque decor and dedicated espresso bar almost distract from the club’s eight championship courts that Shue dubs “perfect, just perfect.” Perched in the hills just above Malibu’s Country Mart, the courts are staggered and individually fenced (no pesky stray balls!). Beware of booking MRC’s bird’s nest court, though: “When someone says they want go up to Court 8, there are snickers,” laughs club GM and Ellison’s Malibu hitting partner, **Trey Waltke**. “A lot of affairs have started up there, because you cannot be seen by anyone.” Ellison, Waltke and Oracle CEO **Mark Hurd** (a former college player) are active in shining a spotlight on U.S. college tennis talent, hosting collegiate tournaments and pro-am events at the club. Austin, Davenport, Olyphant and Haas showed off their prowess at the club’s recent Oracle/ITA Masters.



Brosnan



Shue



Ellison

Mulholland Tennis Club

2555 CREST VIEW DRIVE, L.A.
mulhollandtennisclub.com

FOUNDED 1966

FEES \$17,000 initiation; \$275 per month

COURTS 7 hard courts

WHO PLAYS Will Ferrell, Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban, Kevin McKidd, Julie Bowen, Selma Blair, showrunner **Matt Tarses**

THE SCORE Hidden in a residential enclave atop the Hollywood Hills, Mulholland has near



Actresses Hepburn (left, playing for 1952’s *Pat and Mike*) and Barbara Stanwyck (in 1934) were accomplished players on the Hollywood tennis scene.



360-degree vistas of the city. The midcentury-modern clubhouse’s dining room overlooks the entire valley, and newly installed glass around the pool deck reveals a bird’s eye view of downtown Los Angeles. Composer **Adam Gorgoni**, who sits on the members-owned club’s board, warns it “can get breezy on the courts — you need to learn how to handle the ball in the wind.” Membership is “TV heavy,” says one member, with an unpretentious Canyon vibe. A vegetable garden behind the courts supplies the kitchen. Music attorney **Jay Cooper**, who plays there every weekend, remembers when the club opened, it had strict rules that called for tennis whites, plus a dinner jacket and tie in the dining room: “There was a revolt about that, and we threw out the club’s first president.” Bonus: Members are able to recover 60 percent of the current initiation fee when they leave the club.



Ferrell



Kidman



Urban

Riviera Tennis Club

1250 CAPRI DRIVE, PACIFIC PALISADES
therivieracountryclub.com

FOUNDED 1963

FEES \$24,500 initiation; approx.

\$450 per month

COURTS 22 hard, 2 clay and 22 ball-machine courts

WHO PLAYS Adam Sandler, Tracey Ullman, Pete Sampras, Brillstein Entertainment Partners

CEO **Jon Liebman**, writer **Stephen Gaghan**, WME’s **David Wirtschafter**

THE SCORE For an adjunction to a golf club, the Riv’s tennis footprint is massive. There are two levels of courts, and its some 1,000 members, prodigiously repped by industry agents and lawyers, are known for being competitive. “You’d think they’re playing at Wimbledon,” says one member. That’s what Brillstein’s Liebman likes about the Riv: “There’s a critical mass of people who are at a similar level and like the game to be both competitive and social.” Back in the day, **Katharine Hepburn** played here on the two secluded courts hidden in the canyon off the club’s driveway. “In the ’80s we’d play there with our shirts off,” says producer **Ron Booth**, who has played with **Dabney Coleman** and **Armie Hammer**. Between 40 and 60 members can show up for a night of Riv Ball — the Japanese-owned club’s version of Live Ball (invented by Tennis Channel founder **Steve Bellamy**), a fast-paced drill that rotates sets of players on a court. “You’re working on your reactions hitting tons of balls,” says Booth. “It’s your chance to be on court with very good players.” Former pros such as Sampras play, and **Pam Austin** (Tracy’s sister) is Riviera’s director of tennis programming. Bonus: Tennis members pay a fraction of the golf club fees, but are allowed to use the main club’s facilities. **TJR**



Sandler



Sampras



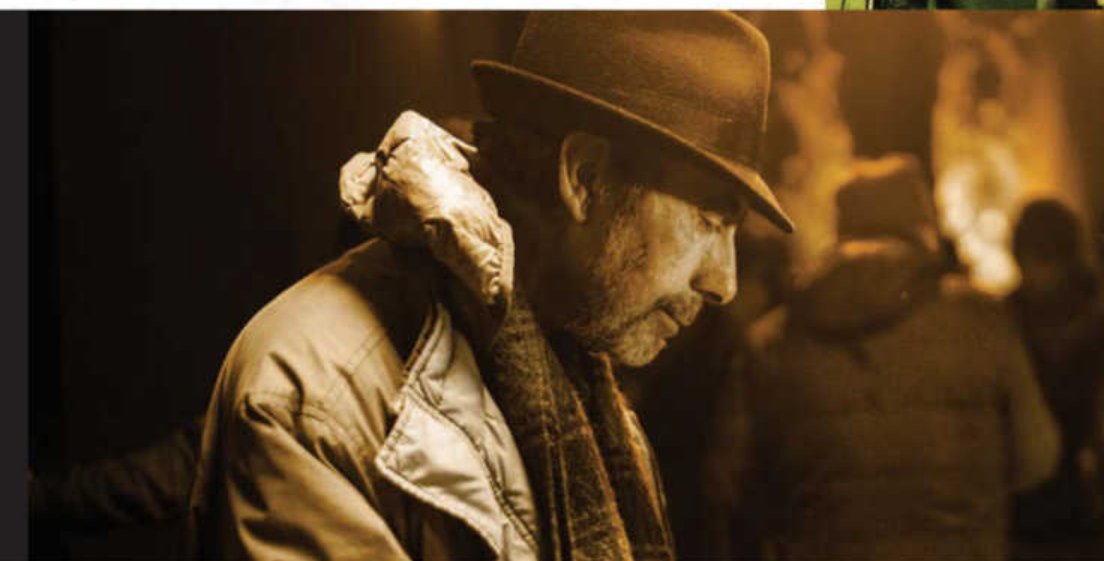
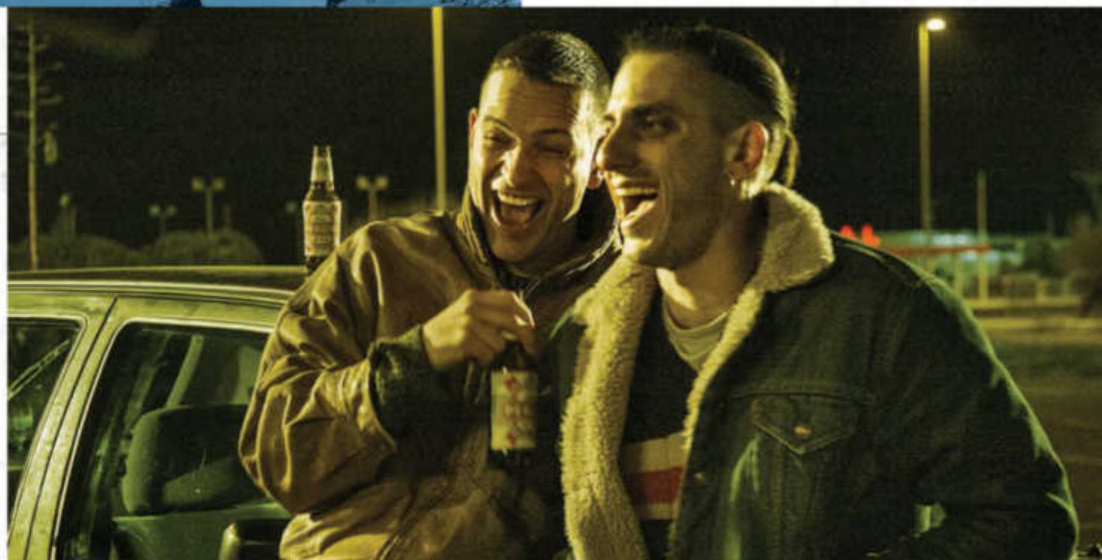
Ullman

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- INTERNAZIONALE

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ONE OF THE MOST **BEAUTIFUL & HEARTBREAKING**
THAT YOU CAN SEE THESE DAYS"

- GOFFREDO FOFI, L'AVVENIRE



BB-8, the droid introduced in *The Force Awakens*, was photographed Dec. 3 at Milk Studios in Los Angeles.

BLUNT FORCE

HOW *STAR WARS* IS
CHANGING HOLLYWOOD

Disney's *Force Awakens* is equal parts Death Star (ready to destroy competition) and Jedi savior (promising billions to a hungry box office). In between, there is a studio whose \$4 billion investment in Lucasfilm must pay off, from merchandise to theme parks to video games. Says one analyst: 'No wonder J.J. Abrams is nervous'

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
JOE PUGLIESE

FANS AREN'T NEARLY AS HUNGRY FOR A NEW *STAR WARS* movie as The Walt Disney Co. is. The Dec. 18 opening of J.J. Abrams' *The Force Awakens* represents the culmination of CEO Robert Iger's lengthy courtship of Lucasfilm founder George Lucas, a rich \$4.1 billion acquisition in 2012 that many analysts and rivals thought too pricey, and three years of intense and often problematic development of the all-important franchise relaunch. And now the film arrives with perhaps unprecedented hype, just as the Disney media giant — which has blown past competitors in recent years thanks to a boom in cable fees and theme park attendance, as well as savvy acquisitions such as Marvel Entertainment, Pixar Animation Studios and, yes, Lucasfilm — has seen its stock price fall 8 percent in the past four months. As if it weren't enough that all of Hollywood is watching to see whether *Force Awakens* lives up to astronomical expectations, Disney shareholders now are looking at the *Star Wars* franchise to boost an empire under siege from shrinking subscribers at its cable channels (ESPN lost 7 million subs in the past two years). In modern Hollywood, an individual film almost never moves a big conglomerate's stock. But *Star Wars* isn't just a movie — it's an industry unto itself — merchandising and TV spinoffs and theme park extensions and video games, all dependent on one thing more than any other right now: the creative and financial success of *The Force Awakens*.

But both inside and outside Disney, confidence levels are high. Several key analysts have ratcheted up their stock price targets and earnings estimates based on anticipation for the film. Predicting *Force Awakens* box office has become a cottage industry, with opening weekend forecasts ranging anywhere from \$170 million to \$240 million domestic (never mind that no film has opened to more than \$84.6 million in December). Some believe the film could even beat *Avatar*'s \$2.8 billion global all-time record. And if *Force Awakens* works, it could launch a new generation of movie stars in Daisy



\$4.1B

Amount Disney paid for Lucasfilm

143%

Stock increase since Oct. 30, 2012, the day Disney said it would acquire Lucasfilm

\$4.4BTotal worldwide gross for the six-film *Star Wars* saga so far (not adjusted for inflation)**\$1.2B**Domestic gross for 1977's *Star Wars* adjusted for inflation**\$170M-\$240M**Domestic opening-weekend range for *The Force Awakens***\$1B**Estimated value of *Star Wars* merchandise sold worldwide on Sept. 4, which Disney dubbed "Force Friday"**\$5B**Estimated amount of *Force Awakens* merchandise Disney will sell within a year of the film's release

Ridley, John Boyega and Oscar Isaac, as well as spark interest in an unprecedented four upcoming sequels and spinoffs that have been greenlighted through 2019 and will be overseen by Lucasfilm's Kathleen Kennedy. "This movie is only the beginning of a new generation of phenomenal *Star Wars* storytelling," Iger told analysts in November. Wrote Credit Suisse analyst Omar Sheikh in a fawning note, "Lucasfilm content will continue to be a growth driver across the business — in the studio, consumer products and parks — for the foreseeable future."

It's enough to stoke jealousy and fear in rival studios, which largely are steering clear of *Force Awakens* and sitting in awe of Disney's franchise machine: Pixar, Marvel and now the franchise among franchises, *Star Wars*. "What are the rest of us who are charged with programming for an audience going to do?" lamented Sony chairman Tom Rothman at a recent *THR* roundtable. "Will the box office expand so that the *Star Wars* numbers are on top of the rest of the traditional Christmas box office, or will they take away from other pictures?"

Box office aside, much of Wall Street's enthusiasm for the rebirth of *Star Wars* focuses on merchandise sales, which Macquarie Capital analyst Tim Nollen says could reach \$5 billion in the year of *Force Awakens*. For perspective, *Cars 2* generated \$3 billion in sales. If Nollen is right (some analysts actually think he is underestimating by \$1 billion), Disney's share in year one would be \$500 million.

In fact, the Force already is with Disney's licensing business. In its most recent quarter, earned licensing revenue rose 9 percent year-over-year, and Disney CFO Christine McCarthy says much of that was because of sales of "classic" *Star*

Wars merchandise. Products related to *Force Awakens* — which Disney unveiled Sept. 4 with an event it called "Force Friday," when an estimated \$1 billion in merchandise was sold at stores and online retailers worldwide — will not be accounted for until the movie is released.

THOSE BULLISH ON DISNEY SAY THEIR OPTIMISM ALSO is based on new *Star Wars* lands coming to Disney's theme parks in Florida and California, which, at 14 acres apiece, represent Disney's largest single-themed land expansions ever. Add it all up, and Lucasfilm could turn out to impact Disney for generations to come in a manner at least as influential as the Marvel and Pixar additions.

But still, as important as *Star Wars* is, investors remain nervous about Disney and its suddenly vulnerable TV business. "There is no easy answer that will satisfy critics in the near term," says Steven Birenberg of Northlake Capital Management. But now Disney has an actual new *Star Wars* movie. And after *Force Awakens*, Dec. 16, 2016, brings the standalone *Rogue One*; followed by *Episode VIII* in May 2017; then a movie about a young Han Solo in 2018; and *Episode IX* in 2019.

"*Star Wars* is a very big deal, but the expectations are very high," says Birenberg. "No wonder J.J. Abrams is nervous." — PAUL BOND

KATHLEEN KENNEDY

The Keeper of the *Star Wars* Flame

Since taking over Lucasfilm three years ago, the producer has been busy relaunching a franchise, wrangling licensees and hearing what George Lucas thinks of *The Force Awakens*: 'He's never held back on his opinions' BY KIM MASTERS

WHEN KATHLEEN KENNEDY took the helm at Lucasfilm in 2012, she acknowledged that plunging into the *Star Wars* universe was "daunting." That was an understatement considering the many moving parts involved in restarting one of the most iconic properties in industry history — from movies to television to games to merchandise to brand partnerships — while protecting an invaluable piece of IP that she describes as "fragile."

But this unflappable producer's decades of working with the industry's most A-list talent may have made her the best possible candidate for the job. The list includes Clint Eastwood (*The Bridges of Madison County*), Robert Zemeckis (*Back to the Future*), David Fincher (*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*) and, above all, Steven Spielberg — from 1982's *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* to *Lincoln*.

Kennedy's experience putting high-profile directors at ease has been put to good use at Lucasfilm. One of her first moves was to persuade an ambivalent J.J. Abrams to sign on as director of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. Now about to launch the seventh *Star Wars* flick

while working on the first spinoff, *Rogue One*, and prepping *Episode VIII*, Kennedy is dealing with an ambivalent creator in George Lucas, who has publicly implied that he has reservations about the direction of the franchise. ("People don't actually realize it's actually a soap opera and it's all about

Guest Column

'He's the Jackie Robinson of Jedis'

Black-ish creator Kenya Barris on what a main character of color means to the next generation



BOYEGA: LUCASFILM LTD./DISNEY; BARRIS: PAUL ARCHULETA/FILMMAGIC; KENNEDY: ART STREIBER



◀ “There was a lot to do in getting everything [at Lucasfilm] organized,” says Kennedy, photographed in 2013 in her Santa Monica office, of the past three years. “So every phase of this has been pretty constant.”

attending an American school outside London while *Force Awakens* was in production. Kennedy, who says despite everything, the family managed to be together in London over the Thanksgiving holiday, tells *THR* how she is surviving the madness of relaunching *Star Wars*.

What is your life like these days?

My life is organized chaos. It's very demanding but incredibly fun, and I'm having a blast. I said yes to doing this almost three years ago, and it's been nonstop — literally nonstop — from that moment on.

How are you dividing your time in terms of movies, games, ILM?

I go from L.A. to San Francisco when I'm here [in the U.S.] and we're in between movies. Then when the movies start, I head over to London because that's where we're basing all of our production, at Pinewood. Over the last almost five months now, I've been working on *Rogue One*, and then *Episode VIII* will start up at the end of January. This will be the only time that it's really one right after the other because our whole slate got upended a little bit when J.J. and I needed to postpone [the release of] *Episode VII* from summer to Christmas.

How do you spend your days while the movies are in production?

With the time difference, the good news and the bad news is I could

work 24 hours a day if I wanted to, which I don't do. What it does allow me to do is to focus on the movie in the morning until about 2:30 in the afternoon, when [the West Coast] wakes up, and then I'm talking to everyone in L.A. and San Francisco. I segue into a lot of business having to do with the release of *Episode VII* because we have all sorts of approvals of content and whatnot, and I talk to the franchise group and the story group going into the afternoon and early evening. Then when I wake up, at 5:30 to 6 in the morning, I have fresh emails and information from [L.A. and San Francisco] as they're about to go to sleep. So it does allow me to deal with the business of running the company as well as producing the movies.

There has been so much *Star Wars* merchandise hitting the market — does Disney oversee that part of it?

We're the creative entity. We have a franchise management team. We have Lucasfilm employees working within Disney consumer products. We spend a great deal of time sitting with the various divisions inside Disney talking everybody through our plans, showing them our artwork and, eventually, footage, helping them create the style guides, identifying what it is that the various companies that we're in partnership with are going to execute. That's a collaborative effort between Lucasfilm and Disney. ... Probably the biggest

family problems — it's not about spaceships,” he told *CBS This Morning*. “So they decided they didn't want to use those stories, they decided they were going to do their own thing, so I decided, ‘Fine ... I'll go my way, and I let them go their way.’”) Kennedy, 62, is married to

Frank Marshall, the busy producer of the *Bourne* movies as well as this year's box-office champ — so far — *Jurassic World*. Their older daughter is at University of Kentucky studying equine science and wants to be a horse breeder, while the younger, 17, is a high school junior who has been



Barris calls Boyega's casting a “huge leap forward.”

AS A KID, I WANTED TO BE A JEDI — THAT WAS THE ultimate goal. To find out you could move stuff, to find out that you were more than you thought, that it was something inside of you. It just spoke so clearly to what we're all looking for: You wanna be special.

I feel like the series was about becoming the best you can be as a person, being something special — even more so when you feel like you see something reflective of yourself. So what having John Boyega at the center of *The Force Awakens* does for future generations, in terms of how it affects them, is amazing because it actually puts them in the story in a much more layered and intrinsic way.

Seeing that black people made it to space was big. But Lando Calrissian was ... I mean, I love Billy Dee Williams, but he was basically a space hustler. “That's the character that we get? We get the space pimp?” But I thought the casting of Boyega as Finn was a huge leap forward, not just in terms of diversity, not just for black and white, but looking at our world that we live in today, that we're all a part of it, and we're all sort of part of a joint ecosystem. I look at the casting, and it's exciting to me.



Barris

The way our world is set up, if kids of any color see somebody black doing something, they feel like everyone can do it. Conversely, if black kids see a white guy being the only participant in something, they don't always feel like that's something everyone can do. I could be totally off, but I don't think if a white kid sees LeBron James play basketball, they feel like they can't play.

For a kid for whom *The Force Awakens* is their first *Star Wars* movie, seeing a black man holding a lightsaber as the first image — a little Muslim kid, a little Asian kid, a Latino kid — I feel like all of them can say, “Oh, I can do that, too.”

I made this show, *Black-ish*. It's my first big shot; I just wanted to do a show to pay for my kids' school and pay my bills and have a career. Slowly but surely, I found out, “Oh, it's bigger than just you.” Any time you're one of few, you have certain obligations, whether you like it or not. I want *The Force Awakens* to be really successful. And there's a huge amount of pressure on Boyega. And he can't avoid it. He's the Jackie Robinson of Jedis. — AS TOLD TO MARC BERNARDIN



contribution that Disney has made to the Lucasfilm franchise management was their international component. That was something Lucasfilm hadn't made significant inroads with.

If Disney wants to put characters on a can of Coke, do you have input?

Absolutely. Lucasfilm looks out for *Star Wars*. What are the values inherent in *Star Wars* that we want to protect? It's fragile to a certain extent in that it's a single IP. ... They're depending on us to keep the franchise alive in a way that isn't a cookie-cutter approach. They want to have a dialogue

about how we want to handle consumer products: "At what point could we reach saturation in a way that could have a negative backlash?"

Have you said "We don't think so" to any ideas?

I would say it has more to do with the amount of things that people may want to do. I don't want to name any outside companies that we didn't go forward with. [But] on Disney XD, when we were doing the development on [the animated series] *Star Wars Rebels*, there was a real emphasis on wanting to do something far more comedic

than what we were prepared to do. So we sat down with the story team inside Disney XD, and we spent a lot of time taking everybody through why we thought the show we wanted to develop was a better way to go. The same thing inside the theme park, with the discussion of what that expansion was going to be and to what extent they would involve classic characters, where we would go with new characters, how closely it would tie to the movies. All those discussions have been nothing but collaborative.

The promotion has been pretty constant. How do you know when enough is enough?

I think it's an instinctual thing. It's something we talk a lot about. Even with *Episode VII*, we sat down a year and a half ago and everyone agreed with a less-is-more approach. We were very, very careful to recognize the events that we knew we needed to participate in. You walk a fine line of wanting to execute things well, not oversaturate, and at the same time not come off in a way that suggests that you don't feel you need to do something, taking on a somewhat arrogant approach. We knew

we had the Star Wars Celebration [convention] coming, we knew Comic-Con was going to be a huge event for *Star Wars*. ... We knew D23 was going to be important. We even went into a period of time after we released the first teaser [last November] where we very consciously didn't do anything for three or four months. We knew every little thing we do becomes a big thing.

George Lucas has been pretty public with his skepticism about what's being done to his baby. How often do you talk to him?

I talk to George all the time. George has gone through his own personal process of trying to find his own way of letting go of something that has a huge amount to do with his entire adult life. It's really impossible for him to only get involved a little bit. He either feels he needs to get involved 100 percent and really be running everything or not at all. He had to make that choice for himself, to step away. When I first came into this company, I had about five months where it was back and forth in his mind as to whether he was going to sell, when he was going to sell. At the same time, we

Meet the 5 Architects of the New *Star Wars*

Inside the writers room trusted with charting the course of this latest cycle of movies: an Oscar winner, a tentpole ninja, an old gunslinger and two experts in the ways of the Force BY TATIANA SIEGEL

NOT SO LONG AGO, IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY FROM HOLLYWOOD (SAN Francisco's Bay Area), four men and one woman set out to crack the story for *Star Wars* 3.0.

It was around Christmastime 2012 when Michael Arndt, Lawrence Kasdan, Simon Kinberg, Pablo Hidalgo and Kiri Hart converged for the first time in an office at Big Rock Ranch in Marin — the 1,000-acre spread George Lucas built next to his beloved Skywalker Ranch — to carry out an initial brainstorming session. Over the next month, they began creating the framework for *Episodes VII, VIII and IX* as well as such spinoffs as *Rogue One*.

Their credentials ran the gamut. Arndt is an Oscar-winning writer (*Little Miss Sunshine*, *Toy Story 3*), while Kinberg is the tentpole maven behind such scripts as *X-Men: Days of Future Past* and *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*. Hart leads Lucasfilm's story group, while her colleague Hidalgo is the man responsible for keeping the franchise's labyrinthine mythology consistent and is said to know more about the *Star Wars* universe than Lucas himself. Kasdan served as the group's only original *Star Wars* trilogy alum (he wrote *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* as well as *Raiders of the Lost Ark*).

"It didn't really begin with much of an agenda other than to put a bunch of people in a room who love *Star Wars* and are storytellers and see what stories come out of it," recalls Kinberg.

The first session lasted a week, with days typically beginning with a group breakfast at the Inn at Skywalker Ranch and wrapping around 5 p.m. The quintet relied upon only the previous six movies and the *Star Wars: Clone Wars* TV series as official canon, ignoring the decades-worth of stories from hundreds of assorted novels, comic books and video games. Lunch was brought in from campus eateries within Skywalker Ranch — world-renowned chef Alice Waters and her team trained the food staff, who use organic herbs and vegetables from Skywalker Ranch's garden, the 4,700-acre creative oasis that includes lakes, vineyards and a working farm.



were talking about making new movies. He was the one who initially approached Harrison and Mark and Carrie. All of that he initiated, and I think realizing what it meant to stay involved with its execution was what he had to reconcile. And it's been tough, watching this go on without his direct involvement, but at the same time, I think he really wanted to step away, knowing that it was in good hands. That's why he always, always wanted to sell to Disney. There was no debate around that.

Wouldn't it be better if he didn't talk about the new movie?

I don't want to second-guess what George feels he needs to say or do. It's up to him. If there's one thing I've always known about George, he's never held back on his opinions. Of course I want him to be happy with what we're doing. But having him 100 percent on board is up to him. He's said in his own words, he can't do that unless he's the one running everything. [But] he's seen the movie, and he really liked it.

Where are you with *Indiana Jones 5*?

We're all trying to figure out when

the right time is to step back in. Harrison really wants to do it; Steven really wants to do it. We've kicked around a couple of story ideas, but beyond that, I don't know yet. I think there will be one, we'll certainly move forward with Indy. But right now, everybody's just focused on *Star Wars*.

How far are you into Rian Johnson's *Episode VIII*?

We've thought this all through. The story group has put together a very carefully thought-through strategic plan for how we're developing the stories and what those stories are and targeting filmmakers. We've looked at it up through, I would say, 2019, *Episode IX*.

You and Frank will likely have the Nos. 1 and 2 movies of the year. Do you taunt him?

It's kind of wild, isn't it? *Jurassic World* was really a surprise. It was hilarious — over the weekend when that movie opened, about every two hours I would hear Frank shrieking by his computer because no one saw that coming at quite the level that it did. It is fun that *that's* become the movie that everybody in marketing is comparing us to. **TJR**

Under tight security, the group was insular — with the exception of three or four additional story group executives typically on hand. "It was very collaborative, with all these conversations taking place around a big whiteboard," remembers Hart. "It was very much about putting ideas up on the board and exploring together. There were millions of things that we bounced around and abandoned."

In those early days, the group would meet for a day here and a day there but sometimes for an intense five-day stretch. "The dynamic was in many ways like a TV writers room, where you have writers breaking story, knowing many of the main characters from the original trilogy but not knowing where their story may go," adds Kinberg. The group continued to meet in the Bay Area over the weeks that followed, sometimes at Skywalker Ranch and other times at Big Rock or an office at Industrial Light & Magic's campus in the Presidio neighborhood of San Francisco. Lucasfilm president Kathleen Kennedy would drop in occasionally. Surprisingly, Lucas never made a cameo.

Not long after director J.J. Abrams boarded in January 2013, the meetings began to shift to his Bad Robot offices in Santa Monica or to Kennedy's offices in The Kennedy/ Marshall Co., just blocks away. Abrams became the driving force in the process and started working one-on-one with Arndt. Kasdan, who eventually replaced Arndt as *Force Awakens*' primary writer, and Kinberg would get involved again for short spurts. But nothing that followed quite replicated those early days of three writers (Arndt, Kasdan and Kinberg), and two executives (Hart and Hidalgo) working together as a close-knit team.

"It felt a little bit like being at camp in the best possible way," says Hart. "It was like we removed ourselves from everything else and just talked about this thing that we all loved. It really was the best possible creative room."



Abrams (left) and Kasdan on the set of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

Guest Column

**MICHAEL GIACCHINO:
On the Importance of Jo  Williams
Coming Back to Score *Star Wars***

The Oscar winner — who wrote the music for every J.J. Abrams project from *Alias* through *Star Trek* — on why he's fine sitting this one out



Williams conducted a *Star Wars* suite at the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Walt Disney Concert Hall in 2014.



Giacchino

I WAS 10 YEARS OLD IN 1977 WHEN I RAN DOWN the steps on Christmas morning to find the double album LP of *Star Wars* waiting for me. I ripped it open, ran back up to my bedroom and threw it on the turntable. That was the day I truly understood that music was storytelling. I listened to that album day and night, memorizing every single note. By studying those liner notes, I discovered the various instru-

ments of the orchestra, learning which type of instrument was used for this or that cue. My education in music had begun.

So at 10 years old, I began listening to John Williams. I listened to everything I could get my hands on. It started with his scores to *Close Encounters*, *1941*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and so on. The second a new John Williams score hit the shelves, I was begging my parents to buy it for me — which they always did. I would repeat the same process as I did with *Star Wars*: the repeated listenings, the studying of the orchestrations and, even more importantly, the storytelling.

Those film scores opened me up to an entire world of music, and I was completely absorbed from then on. I started rifling through my dad's record collection and found Benny Goodman, Louis Prima, John Phillips Sousa, Peter Nero, Martin Denny, Mozart, Rossini, Respighi, mariachi music — the list goes on and on. But what I was always listening for was a good storyteller. John Williams had taught me how to find that. He was the best teacher a kid could have.

Many years later, I was thrilled to receive a Golden Globe for my work on the Pixar film *Up*. One of the first calls I got the next day was from John Williams congratulating me on the honor. As we spoke, I flashed right back to that Christmas, and I could still clearly see that *Star Wars* album under the tree. As John and I talked, I realized that he had changed the direction of my life that morning.

On the verge of another Christmas, 38 years after that first *Star Wars* album debuted, I am privileged to still call John a friend, and I couldn't be happier to see my other friend, J.J. Abrams, get the opportunity to work with not just my hero — but the hero of a generation of filmmakers and composers.

Oh, and guess what's on my Christmas list this year?



WHEN RELEASING STAR WARS WAS A RISK

Hard as it may be to imagine today, there was a time when putting the sci-fi film into theaters required faith, chicanery and balls of steel. Five veteran distribution execs who were there in 1977 look back on the challenges that came with being part of movie history

BY PAMELA MCCLINTOCK

THE FORCE WAS DEFINITELY NOT WITH *Star Wars* in the months leading up to its release over Memorial Day weekend in 1977. Even executives at 20th Century Fox had their doubts. *The Other Side of Midnight*, based on Sidney Sheldon's potboiler, was supposed to be the studio's big summer hit, while George Lucas' movie was considered the "B track" for theater owners nationwide. In those days, film buyers had to bid blind for titles (trade screenings happened at the eleventh hour). The decisions — right or wrong — defined careers. Here, *THR* talks to five buyers who were part of the *Star Wars* revolution — after opening on 42 screens, the film expanded to 1,750 and stayed in theaters for over a year — on their way to becoming Hollywood players: Erik Lomis, 57, now head of distribution at The Weinstein Co.; Chuck Viane, 70, the former head of distribution at Disney; Bob Lenihan, 61, president of programming at AMC Theatres; Travis Reid, 61, head of distribution at Broad Green Pictures (Reid and Lenihan were friends and admitted hippies living in San Francisco in 1977); and Larry Gleason, 75, now with Arenas Entertainment.

GLEASON I was president of Mann Theatres, which had the Chinese in Hollywood and theaters in Westwood. There were a lot of people at Fox who didn't want to make *Star Wars*. The running joke was that when George Lucas made his final pitch to Alan Ladd Jr., who was running Fox at the time, Laddie said no, but he said it so softly nobody heard him.

LOMIS In the months before it opened, a lot of the older guys thought of *Star Wars* as a kiddie movie. The cast meant nothing, and no one knew who George Lucas was. I was working for a circuit called Sameric Theatres in Philadelphia. We thought we got hosed because the competition got the big "A track" picture, *The Other Side of Midnight*. Five years later, the same thing happened with two Steven Spielberg movies, *Poltergeist* and *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*. The big one was supposed to be *Poltergeist*. *E.T.* was an afterthought.

REID I think it did more or less start that way — Fox making you take *Star Wars* if you wanted *Other Side of Midnight*. But it ultimately flipped around: If you wanted *Star Wars*, you had to play the other film.

LENIHAN I was 23 and booking country towns in Northern California for United Artists, which also owned the Coronet Theatre in San

The \$5B Star Wars Merchandise Bonanza



IN JUNE, WALT DISNEY INVESTED AN UNDISCLOSED AMOUNT OF MONEY IN SPHERO, A MAKER OF ROBOTIC toys. The following month, the company got a visit from Robert Iger, who took out his phone and showed Sphero CEO Paul Berberian some on-set photos of BB-8. "You already make stuff like this, right?" the Disney CEO asked Berberian, pointing to the bubble-shaped droid from *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

Fast-forward seven months, and the BB-8 by Sphero, a toy robot standing 4½ inches high and selling for \$150, arguably is the hottest piece of *Force Awakens* merchandise. Sphero is private, so Berberian won't disclose sales figures, but he says the company is making "hundreds of thousands" of units per month.

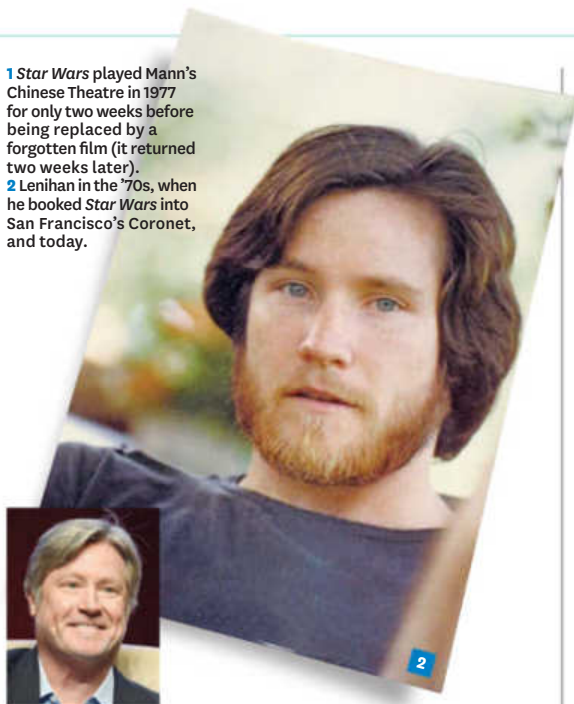
So if Sphero's BB-8 is the holy grail of *Force Awakens* gear, what might end up at the opposite end of the spectrum? With Wall Street estimating worldwide merchandise sales of \$5 billion in the first year, there's plenty of oddball pieces to choose from, including the \$80 Furbacca (remember the '90s sensation Furby?) from Hasbro, a \$60 piece of BB-8 rolling luggage, a \$180 Jedi Master Kickboxer punching bag, *Star Wars* Limited Edition lipstick and mascara (\$35 for both) and, yes, adult underwear for \$35 a pop. — PAUL BOND



1 Sphero's BB-8 toy is the pick of the merchandising litter.

2 If you're nostalgic for the '90s Furby doll, then maybe Furbacca is up your alley.

1 *Star Wars* played Mann's Chinese Theatre in 1977 for only two weeks before being replaced by a forgotten film (it returned two weeks later).
 2 Lenihan in the '70s, when he booked *Star Wars* into San Francisco's Coronet, and today.



Francisco. I tease Travis all the time that the only time I ever won was when he picked *The Deep* for a theater in Redding, Calif., while I picked *Star Wars*. On opening day at the Coronet, there were lines around the block. It played there until *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* opened in December, and we were still hitting our holdover numbers.

REID We hadn't seen *Star Wars* before we had to choose. I was a rookie buyer at Theatre Management Inc., based in San Francisco, and cocky enough to think my pick of *The Deep* — with Jacqueline Bisset in that wet T-shirt — was going to do a lot of business.

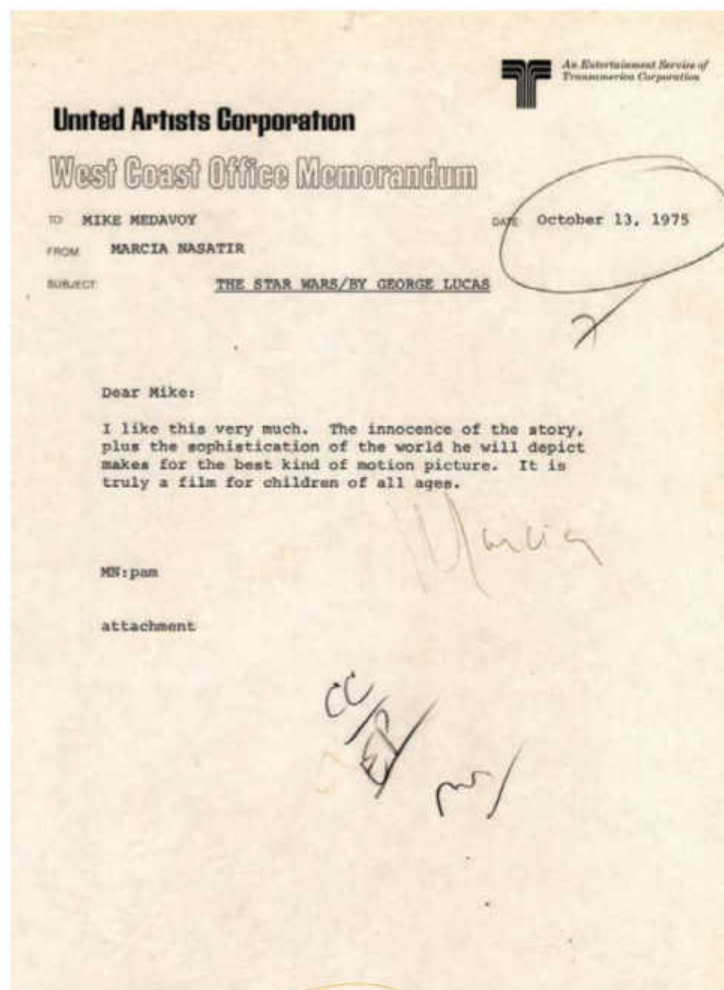
VIANE I was at General Cinema Theatres in Chicago and running the Midwest. Back then, movies played in exclusive runs in select cities. I bid for *Star Wars* and won it exclusively for the St. Park, a struggling theater we had just bought in Minneapolis. I don't recall whether it was the first week or weekend, but the St. Park grossed \$250,000, more than it had made in the prior three months.

LOMIS The movie played at Eric's Theatre in downtown Philadelphia for a year. It was nuts. What I remember most, though, is when it broadened to the suburbs. I was calling around to get the first matinee grosses, and my kid sister, Sandy, answered the phone at one location. She said she was too busy and hung up on me. *Star Wars* changed how movies were released. *The Empire Strikes Back* opened everywhere.

GLEASON In those days, you had studio customers. Mann's main customers were Paramount

The Memo That Almost Brought *Star Wars* to United Artists

Marcia Nasatir remembers reading George Lucas' story and recommending to her boss, Mike Medavoy, that they pounce **BY SCOTT FEINBERG**



IN 1975, WHILE EMPLOYED AT United Artists as the first female vp production at that or any other studio, literary agent-turned-studio executive Marcia Nasatir read an unusual story at the request of UA production chief Mike Medavoy, who was seeking an interesting sci-fi project.

"George Lucas was one of Mike's early clients when Mike was an agent at [ICM precursor] CMA," recalls Nasatir, now 89 and still developing indie projects. "Lucas submitted *The Star Wars* to Fox, and they initially turned it down, so George offered it to Mike. Mike gave it to me, I read it, and I wrote that memo — I remember feeling very pleased with the phrase 'a film for children of all ages.' Soon after, Mike called me and said, 'We're gonna go after it!' But before we could, Fox changed its mind."

Says Medavoy, now 74 and chairman and CEO of Phoenix Pictures: "I sent the script to New York, to [UA partners] Eric Pleskow and Arthur Krim, with the recommendation that we make the movie. But that day there was a board meeting at Fox, and they approved it. And that was the end of that." He adds, "At that period at United Artists, everything we were doing was working — *Rocky*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Annie Hall*. So did I feel the loss? Not until the movie came out."

and Warner Bros. Once in awhile, you'd play a picture from someone else. Fox's general sales manager at the time, the late Peter Myers, called and said George Lucas really wanted the Chinese. We had two weeks available before we had to play William Friedkin's *Sorcerer*, from Paramount. Fox has such limited expectations for the film he said that two weeks would be all they needed. After opening weekend, we went to Paramount, but they wouldn't budge. They said we had to live up to our commitment, but we wanted to keep control of *Star Wars*. We owned another theater in Hollywood that wasn't

very nice. It stayed open 24 hours so people slept there. We did a crash renovation, put in new seats, painted it and cleaned it up. We moved *Star Wars* there, where it played for two weeks before coming back to the Chinese.

VIANE No one could have anticipated that kind of success. You didn't have tracking that spelled out opening-weekend grosses or social media. That's how theaters earned their reputations back then. They had a big picture and played it for a long time. And as a film buyer, you shined if you were the guy who bought the right pictures.

LENIHAN It's still hard to fathom.

Using the Force: What's Next for *Star Wars*' Stars?



ADAM DRIVER
KYLO REN

The Gersh-repped actor's upcoming films — Martin Scorsese's *Silence* and Jeff Nichols' *Midnight Special* — were booked before *Star Wars*, but sources indicate that Driver, 32, plans to avoid other franchises in favor of director-driven projects.



JOHN BOYEGA
FINN

After booking *Star Wars*, Boyega, 23, moved in June from CAA to WME and left Management 360. He has expressed interest in booking indies, starting out with a key role in James Ponsoldt's *The Circle* (starring Emma Watson and Tom Hanks), which filmed in September.



DAISY RIDLEY
REY

The CAA-repped Ridley, 23, has been in the mix for two films — *Rothchild* at Voltage and EuropaCorp's gun-rights drama *Miss Sloane* — but is unlikely to book anything before making *Episode VIII* in early 2016. She plans to head to college in the new year.



OSCAR ISAAC
POE DAMERON

Isaac, 36, who's repped by UTA and Inspire Entertainment, plays the villain in *X-Men Apocalypse*, which he shot this summer, and is riding a wave of awards buzz for his role in *Ex Machina*. Alex Garland's sci-fi thriller. He's currently filming Terry George's *The Promise*.

"I like watching films — they're like music to me. They make me happy. They make me want to live," says Russell (far left). He was photographed with (from left) Tom Hooper, Quentin Tarantino, Danny Boyle, Alejandro G. Inarritu and Ridley Scott on Nov. 12 at Mack Sennett Studios in Los Angeles.

**'THE MORE YOU
GET HUMBLLED...
IT'S A GOOD THING'**

Says David O. Russell, one of the six auteurs on *THR*'s Director Roundtable, 'There's a fractured war veteran in all of us,' as they talk the lack of 'middle-class films,' their favorite movies, who's stopping at 10 pictures and what to learn from a soap star

By Stephen Galloway • Photographed by Austin Hargrave



PUT SIX OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST FILMMAKERS TOGETHER IN ONE room, and it's inevitable they'll talk about their favorite films. But who'd have thought a visual stylist like Ridley Scott would have chosen an Australian comedy (*Muriel's Wedding*) or that David O. Russell would sing the praises of an old British comedy called *Hobson's Choice*? Those were some of the surprises that emerged when the filmmakers — Danny Boyle (*Steve Jobs*), 59; Tom Hooper (*The Danish Girl*), 43; Alejandro G. Iñárritu (*The Revenant*), 52; Russell (*Joy*), 57; Scott (*The Martian*), 78; and Quentin Tarantino (*The Hateful Eight*), 52 — gathered in an L.A. photo studio on the morning of Nov. 12 to talk about the thing they love most. Another surprise? To see how thrilled Tarantino was to be seated next to Scott — and to hear the story of how Scott called Stanley Kubrick to help fix a problem on his classic *Blade Runner*.

Alejandro, you've gone from indie films to the very expensive *Revenant*.

What went right and what went wrong?

INARRITU A lot of things went right — it's just that, to make it right, we had to fight a lot. I remember Clint Eastwood said: "You are dealing with horses and snow. Sorry for you." And I didn't know. How am I going to shoot a horse? I was having nightmares. And everything was in the mountains, in remote locations and incredibly bad conditions. The weather, it's like a terrorist: Everything can explode in any moment. This was like rock climbing without the rope. Once we established the rules of the film language, we couldn't change and say, "Oh, let's go to a blue screen," because [the film] will collapse. There is no way back when you are rock climbing. You go up or you die.

TARANTINO We had a lot of the same issues. And one of the things that prepared me for that was watching a documentary about *Apocalypse Now* and hearing [cinematographer Vittorio] Storaro talking about creating an aesthetic: "Once you do, you can't go back." I told that to the crew, I go: "We're going to create this thing, and we can't go backward. If that means it takes us three months to do this scene, because we have to match that snowfall, then that's what we have to do."

You both have films whose budgets soared. Quentin, yours went from \$40 million into the \$60 millions —

SCOTT That's not too bad —

TARANTINO Thank you, I didn't think so. Sixty-five millimeter, not so bad.

INARRITU As my father said, to speak about money at the table when we are eating, it's in bad taste. A film should be measured by the creative merits, not by the financial profits. Of course, these are business people.

How do you deal with the studio in those situations?

TARANTINO They backed us. Everyone knew what the problem was, all

right? It's not that we're jerking off. They all see what the problem is, they all know what we're trying to do. They trust us. They like the project in the first place, so they double down.

INARRITU This is an art form and it's a business form; that's why it's so contradictory, so exciting and at the same time so nasty. But we responded responsibly [to the] circumstances. When we went out there, the budget we all signed was \$90 million to \$95 million — and we knew that was already dangerous because we could confront problems. Well, guess what? It was the hottest winter in the history of Calgary, which changed weather seven times a day, easily. And we were there in February, running out of snow. Now we were chasing ice, and it was really difficult. That impacted the postproduction because then we were running out of time, so then it cost more money. Was it our fault? No. We responded correctly. There was no indulgence.

SCOTT Planning is a big thing. Who's your line producer? He may need his head slapped. I'm a strategist because I've had so much experience [with] 2,000 commercials, every which way: upside down, in lakes, under water, in snow. And that's a textbook you're never going to get in the career as a filmmaker. Watch the problem coming over the horizon, and if it's a problem, knock its head off before it gets near you.

HOOPER Sometimes your most urgent battles are lack of time and lack of money, lack of resources. And yet we all find ways to render this fight invisible. So when you see the final film, you're not aware of what the directors were really facing. I had a screenplay [*The Danish Girl*] with 184 scenes and 44 days to shoot it — four scenes every day. And in the U.K. system, it's always a strict 11-hour day.

Alejandro, would you make another big-budget film?

INARRITU I don't know. I'm so exhausted now, honestly. It was the first time that I have done two

[films] in a row. I started this before *Birdman*, so physically I cannot even think about any other film.

What's the biggest challenge facing film, as a whole, today?

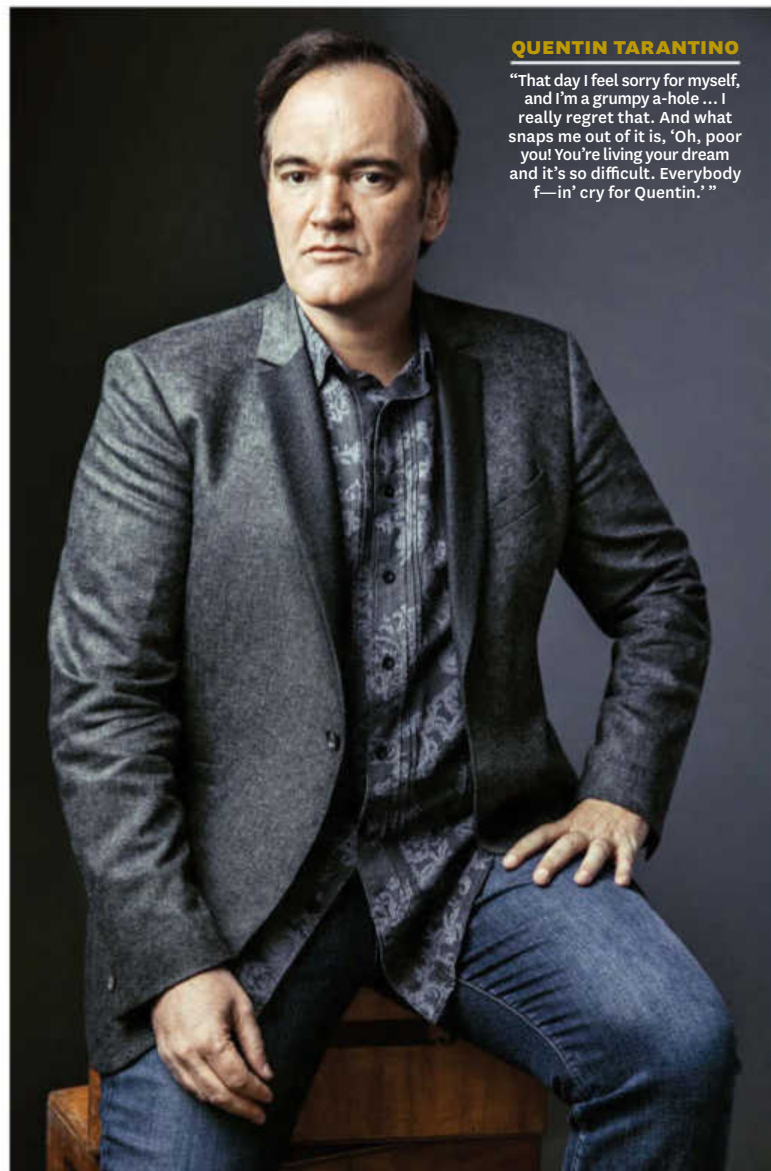
SCOTT The problem with this town is there is no tax rebate. We're in the village, the place of the beginning of features, in Hollywood, and there is no tax rebate.

TARANTINO There are philosophical problems with films today. I mean, frankly, I have to tell you the truth, a lot of films that 10 years ago I would have actually [gone] out to the theaters and watched, I can wait for them to get to the cable channels. I'm watching them six or seven months later, and I'm perfectly enjoying them, but I didn't really miss that much.

INARRITU Independent filmmaking has [been] transported to TV. There's great stories, great things. And in a way, the screens are now full of films that look like TV, just on the big screen. There is no revelation, there is no mystery. I need the mystery of it.

QUENTIN TARANTINO

"That day I feel sorry for myself, and I'm a grumpy a-hole ... I really regret that. And what snaps me out of it is, 'Oh, poor you! You're living your dream and it's so difficult. Everybody f—in' cry for Quentin.'"



SCOTT The bar is lower because there are way too many films being made. Maybe there's too many [directors] in the field and therefore the general quality [is worse].

INARRITU What has happened in the economy in the world is happening to film: the 99 percent and the 1 percent division. Now there are super-expensive films or just very tiny-budget films. The middle-class films are disappearing.

What's the last great film you saw?

SCOTT I saw a very, very good film last night [with] a great comedian now actress —

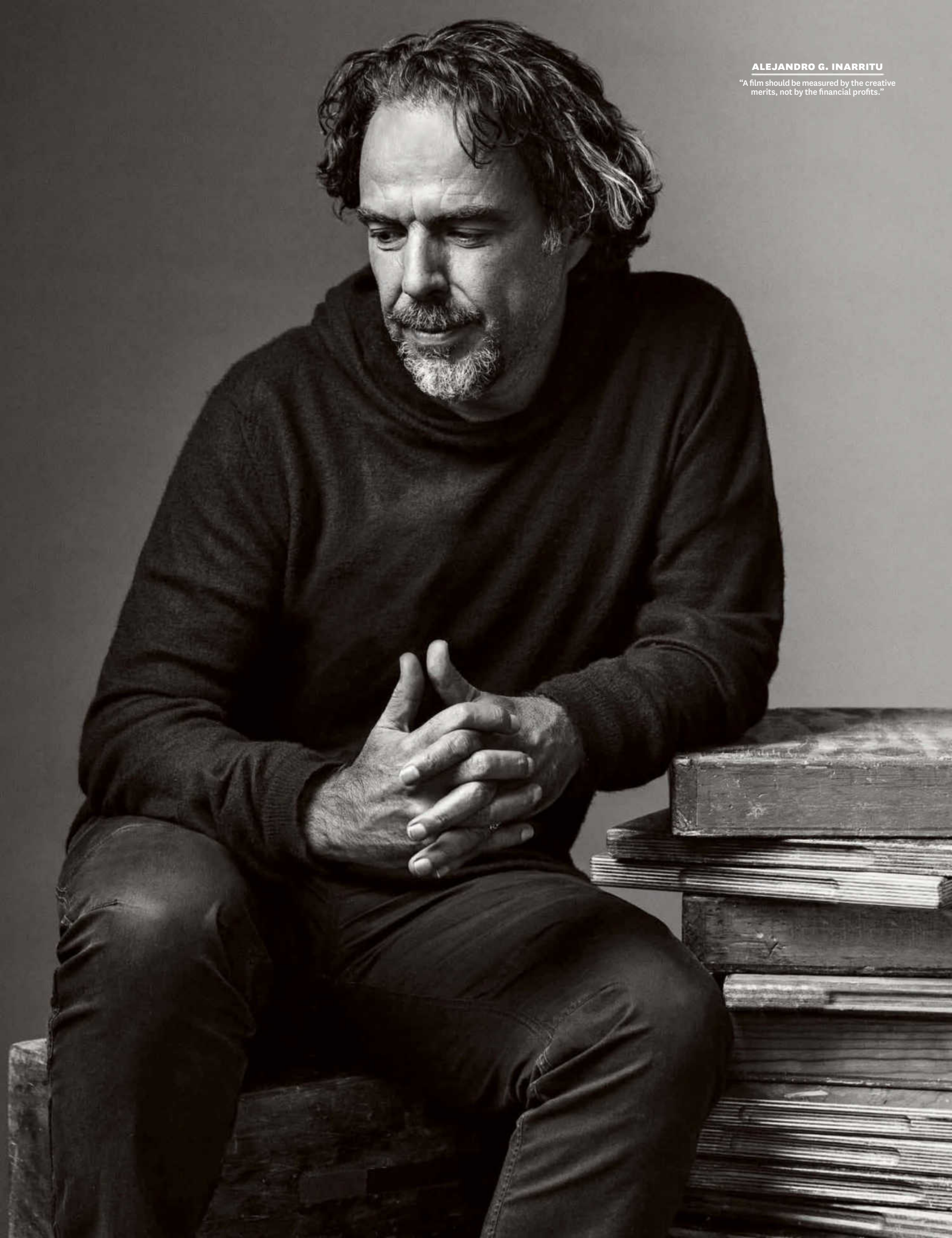
TARANTINO Oh, the Sarah Silverman movie [*I Smile Back*]? I haven't seen it, but I just heard about it.

SCOTT Yes. All this big brouhaha, and all these flashy movies with lots of digital effects and all that shit, and this film has pushed the envelope. ... When you see what we had two years ago, three years ago, it felt depressing. I got slightly depressed about the general quality of films.

BOYLE We've just come off a bruising

ALEJANDRO G. INARRITU

"A film should be measured by the creative merits, not by the financial profits."



experience with *Steve Jobs*, trying to open it out much wider in America. We failed to reach that widest audience. And you should reach that widest audience, because [movie-going] is not a club. Its origins are ordinary people at the end of a tough week who just want to go and lose themselves in some extraordinary idea or image or creation.

TARANTINO The key to what you're saying is that this is a working-man's art form. It's not opera, it's not theater. That was one of the reasons why movies flourished in the '30s. And it's not anymore.

Tom, is film a working-man's medium?

SCOTT Yours aren't, Tom. You're highbrow.

HOOPER I hope my [box office] numbers for the past two films [*The King's Speech*, *Les Misérables*] defend me against that. I mean, I've always felt I make films for audiences. I really don't make them for myself.

SCOTT I don't ever do that. I only make it for me.

INARRITU Well, as a species we look at each other. If tomorrow an atomic bomb finishes humanity and I am the only one staying alive, will I make a film for myself? I don't think so.

We are made to communicate and to express. That's what film is about: the need to share.

Let's say that bomb goes off. You've got a time capsule and can put one moment from a film in it. What would it be?

BOYLE Oh, it's the bone, isn't it? In *2001: A Space Odyssey*. It's that cut from the bone to the spaceship. That says something about us, our history encapsulated.

INARRITU I remember scenes or moments of film that even now I don't understand, but I felt some revelation. Like *Stalker* from [Andrei]

Tarkovsky. Every time I saw that film, I was just saying, "What does this mean?" I am just feeling a revelation of human experience that connects me with something, an intuition. It's about the point of view and a singular vision, right? So every shot is not a resource to tell the story. That shot reveals who you are.

SCOTT You can make a feature film about a pen, depending on what your vision is. It's just that simple. The biggest single word is vision.

HOOPER The match being blown out in *Lawrence of Arabia*. That cut from the match-blow to the landscape. As a young child, I experienced that on the big screen in the Prince Charles Cinema in Leicester Square, which is the only cinema in London that played those great movies. And there was something so extraordinary about it, but you couldn't explain it or put it into words. That moment still seems mysterious.

SCOTT [The whole of] *Muriel's Wedding*. I've seen it six times. It's fantastic.

TARANTINO I kind of reject the question. Because I don't know if it would mean anything for future generations or alien creatures. [But] I would probably take a really magnificent cinematic action scene. I'm not going to go through that, 'cause I'm sure I won't like what I chose — OK, I will: The climax of Jackie Chan's *Police Story 3*, directed by Stanley Tong. That's a sequence that aliens would watch and be amazed by. That could actually give you an understanding of cinema, in all of its bells and whistles and movement.

BOYLE There's the climax of *The Wrong Trousers* — that action scene, that's one of the greatest action sequences I've ever seen.

RUSSELL I used that when I made *Three Kings*. The rhythm of it. With the chase sequences, I wanted them to have that propulsive quality, leaving a village and a missile being fired at them. That's fantastic. I watched it many times. I watch films incessantly. I like watching films — they're like music to me. They make me happy. They make me want to live. I've been watching a David Lean film, *Hobson's Choice*, which is such a treasure and a cousin of *Joy*, because it's about a woman — she's underestimated and she has to go out and make herself. So I would take this scene where her father says, "You're a spinster, you're done." Women get underestimated, anybody gets underestimated. [But] there is no greater inspiration you can give somebody than to underestimate them: That throws down the gauntlet.

DANNY BOYLE

"You should reach the widest audience, because this is not a club. Its origins are ordinary people at the end of a tough week who just want to go and lose themselves in some extraordinary idea or image or creation."



THE FILMS



THE DANISH GIRL

After winning a best director Oscar for *The King's Speech*, British director Tom Hooper tackles another period drama, about a transgender pioneer.



THE HATEFUL EIGHT

This Western reteaming Quentin Tarantino with Samuel L. Jackson and Tim Roth could be one of his last films if the helmer sticks to his word.



JOY

David O. Russell's loose biopic of entrepreneur Joy Mangano sees a return of his favorite ensemble: Jennifer Lawrence, Robert De Niro and Bradley Cooper.



THE MARTIAN

Writer Drew Goddard had to pull out as director of this space odyssey, allowing Ridley Scott to join a select group of directors having a 70-plus resurgence.



THE REVENANT

A year after accepting the Oscar, Alejandro G. Iñárritu returns with another Fox picture — which he started before *Birdman* and completed afterward.



STEVE JOBS

Producer Scott Rudin was amazed to get an instant "yes" from Danny Boyle after David Fincher dropped out. Boyle in 2009 won an Oscar for *Slumdog Millionaire*.

Do you feel you've been underestimated?

RUSSELL It's like J.D. Salinger. He wanted to be a great writer, and he was a 25-year-old kid who had a great voice, but it wasn't till he landed on D-Day and had trauma — he was in every great battle, the Battle of the Bulge — just eviscerating trauma. That made him, that pain and humility. There is a fractured war veteran in all of us, and the more you go through the blood and guts of your life and get humbled, which I got — humbled — it's a good thing. It makes you more human. It makes you love more stories. You are more open to humanity, whether it's a working-class person running a metal garage or someone who's going to do something beautiful and sing.

Have you had moments in your careers where you despaired?

BOYLE I made a space movie called *Sunshine*. And it's weird making space movies because you are in the footsteps of the people who have been there before — principally him. (Looks at Scott.)

SCOTT I finished *Blade Runner*, and it was a disaster. And my investors, who were giving me a really hard time, said, "We have to test this with an uplifting ending." Why do we always want uplifting endings? "All right. I'll do it." By then, I had talked to Stanley Kubrick a few times. I called him up. I said: "Listen. I know you shot the hell out of *The Shining*. I know you've got [hours] of helicopter stuff. Can I have some of the stuff? The next day I had 17 hours of helicopter footage. So the end of *Blade Runner* is Stanley Kubrick's footage.

RUSSELL The romantic ending is very magical. And that's part of the reason I go to the cinema — for magic.

SCOTT You should be my producer.

RUSSELL I know some great directors in our town who have come back from rough experiences and said: "I don't know, man. I don't know if I want to do this anymore." It can be

very, very intense and very challenging. But you get to live in a magic world and create magic.

If you had some other career, what would it be?

SCOTT I was at the Royal College of Art with David Hockney [training to be an artist]. We'd have Francis Bacon come and lecture. My biggest battle was at the provincial art school [before the RCA]. I loved to paint motorbikes, and I was always arguing with the tutor. "Why are you painting motorbikes?" And I know now, he should have let me paint motorbikes — that was my thing. I might have been the best motorbike painter ever. So I gave it up for that reason, because I was discouraged. I started painting again, five or six years ago. I just paint myself or the old lady, OK? And I just keep going.

INARRITU I can't do nothing. (Laughter.) I can't.

RUSSELL Sometimes people have said to me, "If you were on *Survivor*, you'd be the first person asked to leave the island." They'd say, "Can you build a house?" I'd go, "No." But hopefully I would stay on *Survivor* because I would entertain people and tell them stories.

Who in this room would survive the longest on *Survivor*?

SCOTT Oh, I would. I love the physicality of the job.

INARRITU Ridley, how do you maintain physically fit every year, every day?

SCOTT It's my mom — genes. My mom was 5 feet tall, and she was like the sergeant major.

INARRITU But you don't have a rigorous diet or exercise routine?

SCOTT No, no. I blew out a knee with too much tennis, so I just try and be sensible with what I eat. Yoga. I like red wine, I love vodka, what can I tell you?

Would you ever do anything else?

TARANTINO I'm probably only going

to make 10 movies, so I'm already planning what I'm going to do after that.

SCOTT Why? Why?

TARANTINO I want to stop at a certain point.

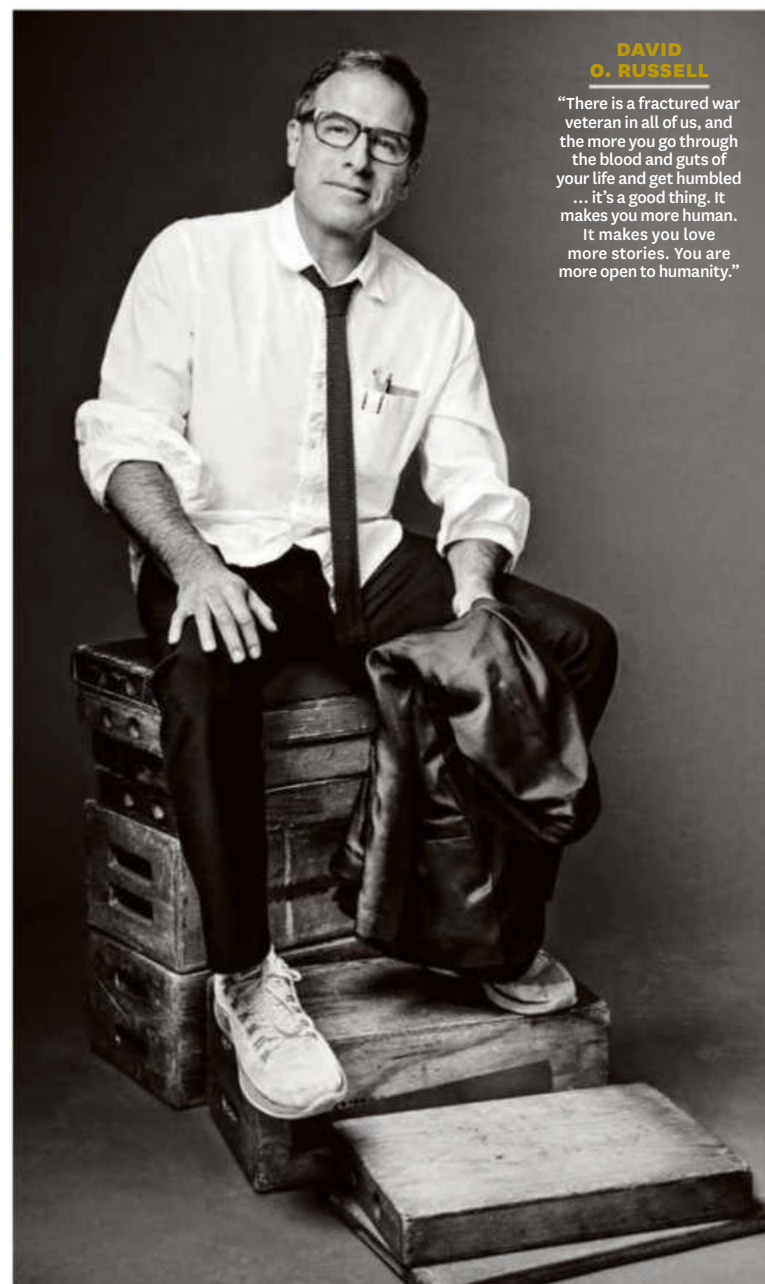
SCOTT What would you do then?

TARANTINO I want to write novels, and I want to write and direct theater. I've got to see how I feel when *Hateful Eight* is over, if I still have the same juice for it, but the

next thing I'd like to do is a theatrical adaptation of *Hateful Eight*, because I like the idea of other actors having a chance to play my characters. So that's where I'm at. I'm working my way into that time period, where I write novels and film pieces and film books, but in particular direct theater.

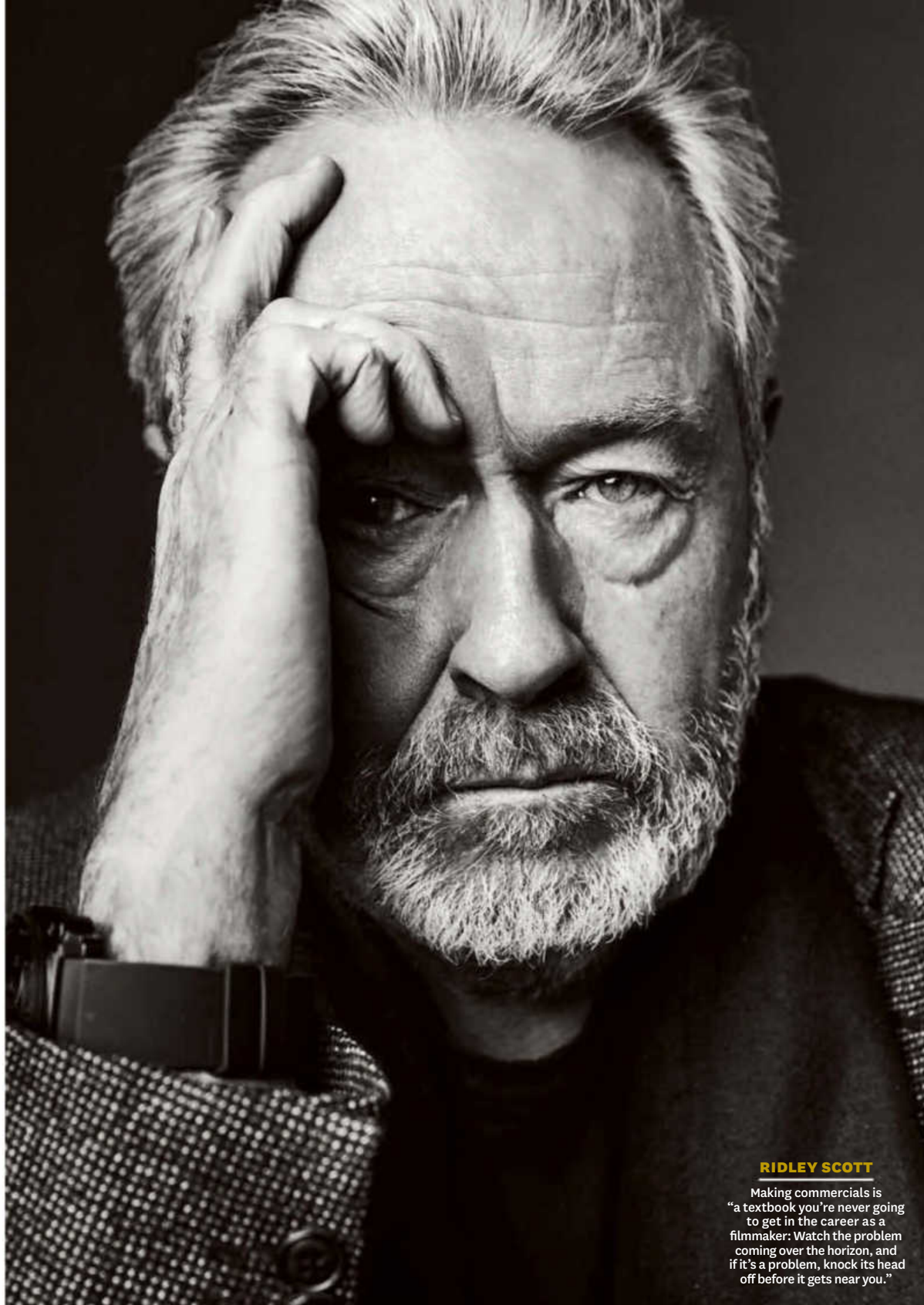
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TARANTINO No, I never have.



DAVID O. RUSSELL

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RIDLEY SCOTT

Making commercials is "a textbook you're never going to get in the career as a filmmaker: Watch the problem coming over the horizon, and if it's a problem, knock its head off before it gets near you."

Have you ever written a play?

TARANTINO No. You know everything I've written. (*Laughs.*)

***Hateful Eight* had a staged reading. What did you learn from that?**

TARANTINO This was actually a big part of my thought process. I wouldn't be so confident with thinking about exhibition [the movie will have a road-show rollout in 70mm projection] if I wasn't confident with the material. And the script-reading really went a long way, as far as that's concerned. *IngLOURIOUS BASTERDS* and *DJANGO UNCHAINED*, you can read almost as a piece of literature, but I still had to figure them out [before

shooting]. It's not for sure that I'm going to pull them off. There is a "finding it" in the course of making it. But with *Hateful Eight*, it was right there. I mean, if I had those actors and we did it in a little theater on Santa Monica Boulevard, 99 seats, it would kill, it would be terrific. I'm not saying the movie is great; I'm just saying that I like the material, so I had a confidence in it.

RUSSELL I would also be a writer. I was a writer before I was a filmmaker. I wanted to write fiction. My father and mother met in the mailroom at Simon & Schuster — my mother was an Italian girl from Brooklyn and my father a Russian immigrant's

son from Manhattan, and they met at Simon & Schuster. My dad was a salesman with a sales case. He would call on all the bookstores, and he knew every great bookstore in America, and he'd go walk into those bookstores. So books were terribly enchanting to me. They supported our household. And I wanted to write one. And I'm actually making a documentary about the fascinating world of [publishing]. You go all the way back to Charles Dickens: When Dickens came to the United States, he was on a train, and he thought it was snowing — but it was people spitting out the window. Spitting was so popular, you would

step on a carpet and it would be saturated with tobacco spit. Anyway, so I'm doing that documentary, which is very fascinating to me. But I love writing. I always write scripts; they come in around 175 pages now. They are more novelistic. They have many worlds in them. I think many good movies have many movies within them.

TARANTINO Yeah, that's what I meant: You still have to decipher [a screenplay]; you still have to break the code when you have these novels that are not scripts.

RUSSELL Yes, yes, yes. And a novel allows you to go into [other stories]. Jennifer Lawrence's mother [in the film] is into soap operas. So we shot a soap opera from the '60s to the 2000s, with Susan Lucci and Maurice Benard, who is like the Brando of soap operas. And those guys are like professional athletes. I'd go, "Donna Mills! Susan Lucci! Let's have a catfight." They don't go, "Oh wait, what's my motivation?" They just go, bang! I was blown away by the power of these women actors.

TARANTINO That might be one of the most interesting things said at the table. The power of soap opera actors. That actually is a nugget, and I buy it 100 percent. (*Laughter.*)

Did you write *Joy* for Jennifer? This is your third film together.

RUSSELL There was another thing I was writing [for her] to do. Two summers ago, I wrote about 600 pages, two parts of a big family opus I wish to do — and then I wrote *Joy*.

INARRITU With Leo [DiCaprio], I said: "I would love to see you fragile, vulnerable, to see the man that can be broken." And he was very excited about it. And he transformed himself physically. He went on a diet, he let his hair grow to here, a beard that was almost like Santa Claus. What I like is, he is not only an actor, but his comments come from a filmmaker's point of view. He understands the film. And Leo has this internal rhythm that is just like a machine, like something that is blending things. And I was very impressed by that.

RUSSELL I was talking to him at the same time he was doing this with you, and it wasn't certain if it was going to happen, due to the weather, and he was briefly considering playing a role in *Joy* as a singer. So on the one hand, he was talking about playing this singer, and on the other hand, he was going out into the wilderness to do this thing. I called it "the bear movie." I'd go to his house and I'd say, "You're going to

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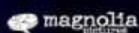


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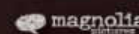


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TOM HOOPER

"I feel a lot of my life, I'm fighting the possibility of regret. Whenever you make a movie... you're not guaranteed that it will find an audience. I'm always afraid that I'm going to say no to a script and realize that was the thing to do. It's just a matter of time."

go climb in that bear body, aren't you?" But he does think like a filmmaker. He'll have those conversations for 10 hours.

Who's taught you the most about film?

HOOPER I remember directing *Prime Suspect* for TV. It was one of the first days of the shoot, and I laid this long track, and [Helen Mirren] came in first thing in the morning. I said: "Good morning, Helen. You're going to walk from here to here, and the camera is going to go like this as the camera tracks." And she looked at me and said, "Well, why am I walking?" I said, "Well, because..." and then I started to run out of steam. And she said, "I think I'd be over there, smoking out the window." And I thought about it and realized that there was no particular reason why this character would be walking. And this moment of a guilty cigarette, where the character has been giving up, was far better. At that moment, I realized that the truly great actors have a kind of mise-en-scene in their head. And from that moment on, I've never imposed the way I'm going to shoot on an actor.

BOYLE We did a lot of rehearsal before we started shooting [*Steve Jobs*], and then you turn up in the morning and do a little bit of blocking and

stuff like that. And [Michael Fassbender] said to me, "Will you shoot the rehearsal?" And we did. And I will always do that now, forever more. It was incredible because it lifts everybody.

TARANTINO One of the things that me and Ridley have in common is we both made our first movies with Harvey Keitel [*Reservoir Dogs* and *The Duellists*]. And Harvey really took me under his wing, and one of the things that he taught me in auditions was [what to do when] actors come in. He would say: "Quentin, don't help them out in that very first reading. Don't tell them how you want the scene. They've had the material themselves, and they've come up with their own thing. You will never, ever see what was in their head the very first time unless you let them do it." And I have held onto that for 21 years.

SCOTT I never rehearse, ever. [But] I storyboard everything from scratch, right through. And so I've shot it on paper before I get there. Harvey is absolutely right. Don't tell them what you want. I want to see how you tick, dude.

Ridley, you've had a long career.

Do you have any regrets? Do any of you?

SCOTT Nothing, nothing.

BOYLE I did this little family film called *Millions*. It's a beautiful little film about a boy and his mom. And one of the great Clash songs was going to be at the end of the movie, and I was persuaded out of it by one of these music supervisor people. That's the only thing I can think of. **INARRITU** I come from a Catholic background, so guilt is a big part of it. But I would have loved to be a bit more practical. I am a little bit romantic, and that can backfire on me badly.

RUSSELL I tend to be hopeful and positive about everybody, and that has made me naive sometimes, picking certain crewpeople that you knew were not going to be in tune with you, and then it turned out to be an unpleasant experience.

HOOPER I feel a lot of my life I'm fighting the possibility of regret. Whenever you make a movie, it's two years of your life and it's a huge investment, and you're not guaranteed that it will find an audience. And I suppose I'm always afraid that I'm going to say no to a script — and realize that was the thing to do. It's just a matter of time.

TARANTINO The only thing that I actually really regret about my behavior is — especially when the film is a long shoot — you get down, and you just get sick of it.

You've just f—in' had it. And that day I feel sorry for myself, and I'm a grumpy a-hole and everyone's [saying], "Oh, Quentin's in a bad mood and stay away from him" — I really regret that. And what usually snaps me out of it is, like, "Oh, poor you! You're living your dream and it's so difficult. Oh, everybody f—in' cry for Quentin."

Do you regret making your recent comments about the police?

TARANTINO Well, no, because I believe I was telling the truth, and I was sticking up for a lot of people who don't have a lot of power.

Is there any special memory of working on a film that you cherish?

TARANTINO I guess it would be the twist contest in *Pulp Fiction*. It was just this thing in my head, and the twist sequence would have been there if John Travolta had done it or not, all right? I just ended up having a magnificent dancer who people wanted to see dance. That was the part I didn't quite get [until] I saw it with an audience. Oh my God! When I watched it with audiences who hadn't seen it before, when he kicks off his shoes, there was this murmur. "He's going to dance!" That was a really lovely moment, and I was still very young in my career. It was lovely. **TIR**

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MAKING OF

Brooklyn

Saoirse Ronan nearly won an Oscar at age 13 for *Atonement*. Eight years later, she's giving it another try, in a coming-of-age drama 'that couldn't get more personal' BY REBECCA FORD

EARLY IN NOVEMBER, Saoirse Ronan was having drinks in a London pub with Irish author Colm Toibin when suddenly they were both overcome with the urge to sing. After all, they had reason to celebrate: *Brooklyn*, the Fox Searchlight drama based on Toibin's 2009 novel and starring the 21-year-old Irish-American actress, had just opened to rave reviews (*THR* called it "a beautiful and moving film, classily and classically crafted"). So they set down their glasses, and in soft, reverent voices, began crooning an old Irish ballad called "The Auld Triangle."

"It's the kind of music that really silences people," says Ronan, recalling how the bustling bar settled down during the impromptu duet. "It's something that Irish people sing all the time — it'll

happen at a wedding; it'll happen at a christening."

Apparently, it also happens in pubs when a promising child star (with an Oscar nomination at age 13 for her turn in 2007's *Atonement*) arrives at the point in her career when she crosses over into full-grown actress.

As a minor, Ronan delivered several other memorable performances — playing a murder victim in Peter Jackson's *The Lovely Bones* and co-starring with Eric Bana as a teenage assassin in *Hanna* — but *Brooklyn* is her first attempt at carrying a serious adult drama. A coming-of-age tale set in the 1950s about a young Irish woman torn between two loves on different ends of the Earth: one (Domhnall Gleeson) back in Enniscorthy, her hometown in Ireland; the other (Emory Cohen) in Brooklyn, where she's





2

1. Gleeson and Ronan at a wedding. Gleeson's character doesn't appear in the film until 25 minutes before the end, giving the *Ex Machina* star an added challenge. "His job was to shift the gravity of the film toward himself at a very late point, which is really hard to do," says Crowley. 2. *Brooklyn* is Ronan's first Irish film — and the first in which she uses

her real Irish accent. "I really wanted to be involved in lots of Irish projects, but I hadn't found one that really spoke to me," she says. "In hindsight, I felt like *Brooklyn* found me exactly at the right time." 3. Gleeson and Ronan (seated far left) filmed in Enniscorthy, in the southeast of Ireland. "We were surrounded by locals who were so excited that we

were there — you feel a huge responsibility to them," says Ronan. "I was very aware that everyone was going to watch what we did." 4. "It was obvious to me that the face of Eilis was the primary canvas we were going to paint this story on," says Crowley, with Ronan, who recently won the best actress award from the New York Film Critics Circle.



3



4

begun a new life as an immigrant (until a family tragedy brings her home). It's the sort of bittersweet story that bets the bank (in this case, about \$11 million, financed with 13 partners as an Ireland-Canada-U.K. co-production) almost entirely on the screen presence and acting chops of its leading lady.

"She'd yet to give a performance that would take her from this younger bracket toward a more adult performance," says *Brooklyn* director John Crowley of the actress he cast at the heart of his film. "It felt like a proper stretch for her."

FINOLA DWYER HAD JUST FINISHED making *An Education*, the 2009 coming-of-age drama starring Carey Mulligan and Peter Sarsgaard, when she happened across Toibin's just-published novel. "It spoke to me personally," says the London-based producer, whose own mother had moved from Dublin to New Zealand in the 1950s. "You make your life somewhere else, but then your original home has changed — you can't go back to how it was." When she and producing partner Amanda Posey met with Toibin, 60, in London in 2010 to discuss optioning his book, the conversation naturally turned to who might play the lead role of Eilis. Even at that point, Ronan, then 16, was on the shortlist. "I remember looking her up because Colm Toibin had mentioned her the day we had lunch," recalls Dwyer. "But she was still very much playing teenage roles."

Instead, the part was offered to Rooney Mara, who in 2012 was being offered everything thanks to her turn in *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*. And Mara might very well have made *Brooklyn* if it hadn't taken nearly two years to find a director. Even with a script by best-selling British author Nick Hornby (who also had written the screenplay for *An Education*) nobody seemed interested. "It's about one person, but it's about lots of things," says Hornby, offering his theory for why the material left some filmmakers scratching their heads. "It's deceptively simple, but the story itself is complicated." Posey agrees: "There's something in the material's quietness that I think wasn't that easy for some directors to understand," she says.

One of the first directors Dwyer and Posey approached, even before Hornby had written a word of the script, was Crowley, a Tony-nominated stage and film director whose 2003 black comedy *Intermission* had been a breakout hit for Irish independent movies. At the time, Crowley was committed to another



picture, the surveillance thriller *Closed Circuit* (that went completely undetected on release). But in late 2012, after Crowley had finished cutting *Closed Circuit*, the producers decided to circle back. They sent him Hornby's script. "I felt this breathlessness for the first 40 pages," he says of his reaction. "[Hornby] hadn't overdramatized it. It's a delicate story — a lot of its power rests on a gradual, incremental buildup of emotion." Two hours after receiving the pages, Crowley was on the phone with the producers accepting the job.

By then, though, Mara had moved on. And Ronan had grown up. "The script came around when I was 19, and I was just about to move away [from home]," the actress — who was born in New York but raised in Ireland — recalls in her mild Gaelic accent. "I was waiting for the right Irish project to come along, and then when I read this I thought you couldn't get anything more personal." According to Crowley, there never was anybody else he had in mind to play Eilis, and he told Ronan as much when they met for lunch at her home in Dublin. "She had proven herself at a young age as a brilliant screen actress," he says. "I can still see her eyes watching through the glass in *Atonement*. She's a great watcher, and so much of this story is about observing."

At that same lunch, Ronan mentioned to Crowley that she was considering moving from Dublin to her own place in London but was nervous about the change. Crowley encouraged her, thinking it might put her in the right mood for the part. He was right. When they met again months later to begin preproduction, she seemed struck by homesickness. "Hovering between two spaces — you're not from the country you're living in, yet you don't feel like you're from your own home anymore — she was right in that space," he says. "Seriously confused."

"I had no idea the relevance the story



1. Ronan and Cohen filmed a scene in Coney Island where the young lovers escape the city for a day. "I talked a lot about my character being like a dog and Saoirse's being his owner because he's so loyal — you can tell him off, but he comes right back," says Cohen. 2. Ronan (center, with Crowley and lead hairstylist Lorraine Glynn) prepares for a Christmas scene in the soup kitchen. "The drama in the piece is quite subtle compared to what's out there," says editor Jake Roberts. "So the challenge was to keep the audience engaged — to make sure the story mattered enough to them."

would take on for me," says Ronan. "It was the first time I've played someone whose emotional state was so similar to mine."

It took a little time to find the right actors to play Ronan's transatlantic love interests. Casting director Fiona Weir met with several possible options, but Cohen, 25 (*The Place Beyond the Pines*), ultimately landed the role of Eilis' Brooklyn boyfriend, a young Italian-American plumber, while Gleeson, 32 (*Ex Machina*), got the part of her Irish love, a thoughtful boy who runs the local pub with his parents. Meanwhile, preproduction went into high gear: Locations were scouted (Montreal would stand in for Brooklyn, with only three days of exterior shots of actual Brooklyn brownstones and the real Coney Island), while the script was given last-minute polishing (Toibin tweaked Hornby's dialogue for added authenticity: The Irish don't say "mom"; they say "mammy") and costumes were fitted (with designer Odile Dicks-Mireaux using only real vintage clothing). Most importantly, Ronan learned how to eat like a proper Irish lass of the 1950s. "That was a huge hurdle for me," she says. "I've just got awful table manners, really."

The 35-day shoot began in Ireland, filming Eilis' early scenes before she leaves for America as well as the scenes after she comes back to Dublin. Crowley thought it was important for the character to seem changed when she returns to Ireland, but not in any obvious way. So

cinematographer Yves Belanger used different lenses to give the post-America parts of the movie a slightly different feel. "It's subtle enough that the audience shouldn't notice the change — just feel like the place is a little different," he says.

Crowley felt especially responsible for making sure his native land didn't come across in any way like a Lucky Charms commercial. "Look, Irish culture can become cliched in a heartbeat," he says. "You step an inch to the left or right and we're straight into make-believe territory." One scene in particular had Crowley worried. At one point in the movie, during a Brooklyn sequence, Eilis goes to a soup kitchen to feed elderly Irish people struggling to get by in America. A man stands up and begins to sing the traditional Irish love song "Casadh an tSugain" as the bustling mess hall goes silent. "Seeing an old Irish guy sing in a soup kitchen — you've got to really walk the line with that," notes Crowley (who flew in well-known Irish singer Iarla O Lionaird for the scene).

That wasn't a problem for Ronan and Toibin (who has a small cameo in the film) in the London pub last month. "We were sharing stories, all a bit tipsy, and out of nowhere he started to sing, and I joined in," says the actress, whose performance in *Brooklyn* already has won an award (from the New York Film Critics Circle on Dec. 2). "It's just a very Irish thing to do — there's nothing more unifying than when someone does that." **TJR**



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The Movies That Prove Diversity Is Possible

Whether it's the guys in *Straight Outta Compton* or the gals in *Suffragette*, this season's awards contenders are opening the doors to different voices and rising talents

BY GREGG KILDAY

Let's first stipulate that when it comes to providing opportunities for women, the motion picture industry isn't doing a very good job. The facts speak for themselves. In 2014, only two films among the top 100-grossing movies were directed by women. And according to the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University, among the top 250 films in 2014, only 7 percent were directed by women, and women comprised only 11 percent of all writers, 19 percent of executive producers and 23 percent of producers. When the stats are compiled for 2015, those numbers aren't expected to change dramatically.

Let's further stipulate that while television has begun casting actors of color in prominent roles, the motion picture business lags behind. Last season, that became painfully obvious when all 20 Academy Award acting nominations went to white actors, leading to the creation of the protest hashtag #OscarsSoWhite. This year, at least on the male side of the

ledger, there are black actors who are definitely in contention — Will Smith in *Concussion*, Idris Elba in *Beasts of No Nation*, Samuel L. Jackson in *The Hateful Eight*, Michael B. Jordan in *Creed*, among them — so, depending on how the nominations fall, if a similar hashtag emerges, it could be more like #OscarsNotQuiteSoWhite.

And let's finally stipulate that the Oscars themselves, since they tend to focus on a certain type of generally high-minded movie, offer only a partial portrait of the larger film industry. At best, it's a limited snapshot, for even if the Academy ultimately produces a diverse array of nominations, that doesn't let the movie business itself off the hook.

But with all that being said, and not to sugarcoat the situation, this year's class of best picture contenders is an encouragingly diverse lot.

Start with the movies that address women's issues, none more so directly than Focus Features' *Suffragette*, which looks back to the England of 1912 when women were in the midst of a pitched

What's the top-grossing film of 2015 that centers on a woman? Not the first (*Jurassic World*) and third (*Avengers: Age of Ultron*) top-grossers, where women are relegated to supporting roles. In No. 2, *Furious 7*, there is a multicultural array of female characters, but the guys still command the action. The No. 5 film has a female heroine, but she's the animated star of *Inside Out*. So for the moment, the top-grossing woman character of 2015 is Dakota Joa's Anastasia Steele in *Fifty Shades of Grey*, which has grossed \$571 million.

and surprisingly violent battle to win the vote. With Carey Mulligan playing a fictional working-class woman who gets caught up in the movement and Meryl Streep lending support as feminist Emmeline Pankhurst, the \$14 million film wasn't an easy sell. As screenwriter Abi Morgan said at the movie's London opening: "A film that is fronted by an ensemble of women, and they are not being funny or romantic, is hard. That became a huge obstacle." Added its director Sarah Gavron at the film's Telluride unveiling: "This story has taken over 100 years to tell. I've worked on it for 10 years."

But, then, no one ever said that putting together so-called women's pictures was going to be easy. Finola Dwyer and Amanda Posey, the producers of Fox Searchlight's *Brooklyn*, in which Saoirse Ronan plays an Irish immigrant torn between one lover in the Old World and one in the New, required stitching together 13 pieces of financing and tax incentives from three countries. The producers of A24's deliberately small-scale *Room*, in



which Brie Larson and newcomer Jacob Tremblay play a mother and son trapped in a shed for much of the movie, had to work on just a \$6 million budget. All of which suggests that when movies that focus on women and their experiences do get made, they tend to get made on the margins of the industry.

But at the same time, there were changes afoot in some of the big-budget studio fare, where roles that once automatically would have gone to men were handed over to female protagonists. As the extravagantly named *Imperator Furiosa*, Charlize Theron drove much of the action, quite literally, in Warner Bros.' *Mad Max: Fury Road* and in the eyes of a lot of commentators stole the movie from male co-star Tom Hardy. In the case of Fox's *The Martian*, Jessica Chastain ably commanded the Ares III mission to Mars and called the shots when it came time to attempt a daring rescue of Matt Damon's astronaut. Emily Blunt played an FBI agent in Lionsgate's *Sicario*. And though Warners' *Our Brand Is Crisis* lost awards momentum when it came up cold at the box office — it has grossed \$7 million — it still earns points for taking a character, the political campaign consultant based on the colorful James Carville, and switching genders once Sandra Bullock expressed an interest in the part.

Behind the camera, though, signs of progress are much fewer and farther between. Only a couple of movies in the awards-season scrum were directed by women: *Suffragette*, the second feature that Gavron has helmed, and the Patricia Clarkson-Ben Kingsley indie *Learning to Drive* (from Broad Green Pictures), directed by veteran Spanish filmmaker Isabel Coixet. On the other hand, women did begin to make inroads in the field of cinematography, one craft that has been dominated by men. The Australia-born Mandy Walker shot SPC's *Truth*, the behind-the-scenes look at the *60 Minutes*



Dwyer



Morgan



Parent



Scott



Vachon

Rathergate scandal — which happened to be told from the point of view of producer Mary Mapes, played by Cate Blanchett. Maryse Alberti filmed both the boxing movie *Creed* and the drama *Freeheld*. And Reed Morano not only served as cinematographer but also directed her first feature, *Meadowland*.

By contrast, women producers no longer are a rarity — even in testosterone-driven movies. Mary Parent helped with Fox's logistically challenged *The Revenant*, while Stacey Sher and Shannon McIntosh were both producers on The Weinstein Co.'s *The Hatefule Eight*. Actress turned producer Giannina Scott explains she urged her husband, Ridley Scott, to option the material that became Sony's *Concussion*, because, "It restored my faith in humanity." And veteran indie producer Christine Vachon joined forces with her old friend Elizabeth Karlsen to bring *Carol* to the screen.

On another front, several black dramas claimed prominent positions. Universal's *Straight Outta Compton* became an unexpected summer hit, grossing \$161 million. More than just a musical biopic about hip-hop group N.W.A, its concerns dovetailed with the growing Black Lives Matter movement. Says director F. Gary Gray of filming confrontations between the cops and the N.W.A members: "Experiencing it take after take reminded me of my experiences growing up." Similarly, Spike Lee's new *Chi-Raq* speaks directly to the black-on-black crime in Chicago, where the movie is set, and even though the film is headed to Amazon, it posted a solid opening over the Dec. 2 weekend, grossing nearly \$1.2 million in just 305 theaters. On a more upbeat note, Ryan Coogler's *Creed* — in which a black champion played by Michael B. Jordan picks up Rocky Balboa's mantle — is shaping up as a big hit for MGM and Warners. And looking abroad, writer-director Cary Fukunaga took a look at the grim lives of child soldiers in Africa in *Beasts of No Nation*, streaming on Netflix.

Additionally, LGBT concerns came to the fore in several other films, especially Todd Haynes' *Carol*, although it's probably time to stop calling the TWC film a lesbian love story and just classify it as a love story starring Blanchett and Rooney Mara. Focus' *The Danish Girl* took a sympathetic look at transgender pioneer Lili Elbe, played by Eddie Redmayne. And Spirit Award contender *Tangerine*, from Magnolia, established its authenticity when director Sean Baker cast two transgender actresses, Kitana Kiki Rodriguez and Mya Taylor, to play his scrappy heroines. **THR**

Who Gets a Pass and Who Fails?

Before marking your ballots, take the Bechdel Test

DEvised BY CARTOONIST
Alison Bechdel, the test measures whether a movie has 1) at least two prominent (and named) female characters, 2) who actually talk to each other, and 3) have a conversation about something other than a man. By that measure, most Hollywood films would fail, but a few of this season's awards hopefuls actually pass with flying colors.

PASSED



CAROL

Man? Who needs a man? Not Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara in this stylish adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's novel.

SUFFRAGETTE

Some men try to stop them, but this political sisterhood is unstoppable.

JOY

Jennifer Lawrence's entrepreneur gets lots of grandmotherly support.

GRANDMA

Another intergenerational team of women proves a winning combo.

FAILED



THE REVENANT

There's just one female, a captured Indian woman. Well, maybe two, if you count that bear.

THE HATEFUL EIGHT

Jennifer Jason Leigh becomes a literal punching bag for all the guys.

BLACK MASS

The couple of women in this crime saga don't fare much better.

BRIDGE OF SPIES

True, it's set in pre-feminist times, but, still, Amy Ryan is present only to be the supportive wife. — G.K.

Tangerine





CHEAT SHEET: The 15 Oscar Docs on the Shortlist

Amy Winehouse to Nina Simone, Scientology to the Sudan: This year's crop captures life's highs (Himalayas) and lows (campus rape) BY GREGG KILDAY

Amy

DIRECTOR Asif Kapadia

BOX OFFICE \$8.4 million domestic

AVAILABLE iTunes, VOD, DVD, theaters

The breakout documentary of the year, about the late Amy Winehouse's creativity as well as her struggle with success and addiction, has been named best doc by critics' groups from Boston to Los Angeles. While the singer's family initially cooperated, they dismissed the film as "misleading" shortly before its Cannes debut, but Kapadia countered that it's "honest and truthful to Amy."

Best of Enemies

DIRECTORS Robert Gordon,

Morgan Neville

BOX OFFICE \$893,000

AVAILABLE VOD, iTunes, DVD, theaters
Neville, an Oscar winner for 2013's *20 Feet From Stardom*, and Gordon recount the heated 1968 televised debates between conservative William F. Buckley and liberal Gore Vidal. Neville, who once worked for Vidal as a fact-checker, says, "This seemed like the

ultimate cautionary tale of what media can do when it goes wrong."

Cartel Land

DIRECTOR Matthew Heineman

BOX OFFICE \$704,000

AVAILABLE iTunes

A double-prize winner at this year's Sundance — it scored a special jury prize and best doc director honors — the film, with some peril to the filmmakers, follows vigilante groups battling drug cartels on both sides of the Arizona/Mexico border.

Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief

DIRECTOR Alex Gibney

BOX OFFICE N/A

AVAILABLE HBO, iTunes, DVD

Working from Lawrence Wright's book of the same name, Gibney, an Oscar winner for 2007's *Taxi to the Dark Side*, explores the rise of Scientology and questions the methods it uses to exert a hold over its believers — especially in Hollywood. For him, he says, it was "a kind of journey into understanding that all of us can fall into a belief system



that suddenly persuades us to do things that we might otherwise find appalling."

He Named Me Malala

DIRECTOR Davis Guggenheim

BOX OFFICE \$2.6 million

AVAILABLE theaters, iTunes, DVD Dec. 15
"I thought about my own daughters," Guggenheim, who earned the doc feature Oscar for 2006's *An Inconvenient Truth*, says of the audience he had in mind for his new film, a portrait of young Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai and her relationship with her father, Zia, who gave her a love of education.

Heart of a Dog

DIRECTOR Laurie Anderson

BOX OFFICE \$196,000

AVAILABLE theaters

Anderson, the composer and performer, insists her film isn't, strictly speaking, a "documentary" but more of a "personal essay film." It is, she explains, "a bunch of ideas about how you see and remember. I use myself in it, but it's not like getting to know me and my dog!"

The Hunting Ground

DIRECTOR Kirby Dick

BOX OFFICE \$406,000

AVAILABLE iTunes, DVD

Daring to Film in a War Zone

The short doc *The Testimony* tackles military rape

An aspiring physician turned filmmaker, Vanessa Block traveled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to document the largest rape trial in the country's history. *The Testimony*, one of 10 documentary short films on the shortlist for an Oscar nomination, looks at the 2012 military rape of hundreds of civilians.



Block

What were the major difficulties of filming in the Congo?

The Congo is a war zone, so there are the physical demands of being in a place where there is no infrastructure and no roads. To get an interview, you don't drive to the local village and shoot someone; you are going



The Testimony

on motorbikes and all sorts of other obscure ways to get to these women. There also is the

obvious danger of being in a place that is dangerous for a woman in particular.

What was the most hazardous moment you faced?

In tracking down female rebels, I went deep into the bush, and we tracked down a group of Mai-Mai Shetanis — they are a rebel group in Congo — and upon getting to their camp, they pointed their guns at us, took our cameras and accused us of

being spies of the government. The only way they would let us leave with our cameras is if I shot them in a *Rambo*-style film, which I did.

What do you want audience members to take away from the film?

I think it is very important as a filmmaker that I don't direct people toward any specific action. We need to step back and process. — MIA GALUPPO



- 1 *What Happened, Miss Simone?*
- 2 *Where to Invade Next*
- 3 *Best of Enemies*
- 4 *The Look of Silence*
- 5 *He Named Me Malala*
- 6 *Meru*

The film, which received a high-profile Nov. 22 airing on CNN, is not just an exposé about sexual assaults on American college campuses. It's also something of a call to arms and has screened at hundreds of colleges, universities and the White House.

Listen to Me Marlon

DIRECTOR Stevan Riley

BOX OFFICE \$426,000

AVAILABLE Showtime

Marlon Brando speaks for himself in the new film from Riley, who just won a prize for best writing at the International Documentary Association Awards. Seeking to make a film about the late actor, the director hit pay dirt when the Brando estate allowed him to look through personal effects and he discovered hours of videotapes. "Brando's self-hypnosis tapes," he explains, "ended up providing the title of the film."

The Look of Silence

DIRECTOR Joshua Oppenheimer

BOX OFFICE \$109,000

AVAILABLE iTunes

In a follow-up to his 2012 doc *The Act of Killing*, which was itself Oscar nominated, Oppenheimer returns to the subject of the Indonesia genocide of the 1960s, focusing on one man determined to confront his brother's killers. It just won the IDA's top prize.

Meru

DIRECTORS Jimmy Chin, Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi

BOX OFFICE \$2.3 million

AVAILABLE iTunes, VOD, DVD

When Chin, who had shot footage during two climbs on the vertiginous Himalayan peak of the title, turned to Vasarhelyi to help him shape it into a film, she had no expectation that they'd fall in love and get married. "I don't regret it," she laughs. "Our working relationship is actually quite special." Their collaboration also led to the documentary audience award at Sundance.

3½ Minutes, Ten Bullets

DIRECTOR Marc Silver

BOX OFFICE \$30,000

AVAILABLE HBO

On Nov. 23, 2012, in Jacksonville, Fla., Michael David Dunn shot and killed a black 17-year-old, Jordan Davis, after objecting to the music that Davis was playing. Silver's doc, which received a special jury prize at Sundance, revisits the case, for which Dunn was found guilty of murder.

We Come as Friends

DIRECTOR Hubert Sauper

BOX OFFICE \$51,000

AVAILABLE theaters

A Sundance and Berlin Film Festival prize winner, the film takes viewers on a tour, guided by Austrian director Sauper, through South Sudan, where post-colonial forces seek to exploit the natural riches.

What Happened, Miss Simone?

DIRECTOR Liz Garbus

BOX OFFICE N/A

AVAILABLE Netflix

Garbus compares assembling the footage for her film about the life and times of singer Nina Simone to "a worldwide scavenger hunt," given that Simone's unique and often tempestuous career ranged from jazz to gospel and became interwoven with the civil rights movement of the 1960s, leading to the singer's self-exile in Europe.

Where to Invade Next

DIRECTOR Michael Moore

BOX OFFICE N/A

AVAILABLE in theaters Dec. 23

Moore travels around Europe to spotlight progressive policies that he'd like to see the U.S. adopt. Although he admits the film is "subversive," he insists he's "not angry." But he's still fighting battles, most recently with the MPAA, which insisted on giving the film an R rating.

Winter on Fire: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom

DIRECTOR Evgeny Afineevsky

BOX OFFICE N/A

AVAILABLE Netflix

Winner of the documentary audience award at this year's Toronto Film Festival, this plunges right into the protests that drove Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich from office. **TJR**



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MOIRA

A film by Levan Tutberidze



FOREIGN-LANGUAGE FILMS

Q+A



A FEMALE KILLER HUNTING HER COUSIN

Taiwan's Hou Hsiao-hsien rejects
fantasy in his realistic martial arts tale

BY CLARENCE TSUI

Based on a short story by ninth century Chinese writer Pei Xing, Hou Hsiao-hsien's *The Assassin* centers on a young woman struggling to accomplish the mission of killing her tyrannous warlord cousin. It's a bit of a departure for the auteur, who has been a staple on the festival circuit since at least 1989, when his historical drama *A City of Sadness* won the Golden Lion in Venice. Hou, 68, added another fest honor to his résumé when *The Assassin*, which is Taiwan's submission in the Oscar race, took home the best director prize in Cannes. *THR* talked to Hou about why he chose to put his spin on the venerable martial arts genre.



Hou

fighting, I want them to be more normal, more earthbound.

Compared to Pei Xing's original story, you've changed a lot of things and added quite a bit of detail. Why?

In the story, you have these supernatural characters who could, for example, fly like the wind or transform themselves into a bug. I don't think these are things you could make possible or convincing in a film. So that was why I reverted to realism, to history. Only

the first part of the plot, about Nie being taken away by a nun and trained as an assassin, follows the original story; we just came up with the rest. We looked at the tensions between the central royal court and the warlords back then, citing a lot of references from historical annals.

Why did you shoot the film in the more boxy Academy aspect ratio and not widescreen?

I've always wanted to use that. The way it frames people standing upright — it's so beautiful. Shooting this in widescreen would have diverted attention from the characters. **THR**

Are you OK with people calling *The Assassin* a martial arts movie?

I don't really care that much about what people call this film. It's just that my [martial arts] film is a bit different from the others. What I want is always to make things real, with a real backdrop. I've read a lot of martial arts novels, and I grew up watching martial arts films. But I don't want my films to be mere fantasy — even if they are



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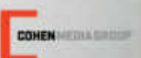
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FOREIGN-LANGUAGE FILMS

Q+A

WHAT IF GOD IS ALIVE IN BRUSSELS?

Director Jaco Van Dormael creates that scenario in *The Brand New Testament*

BY SCOTT ROXBOROUGH



Jaco Van Dormael has been here before. The Belgian director had two previous films submitted for consideration for the foreign-language Oscar: the 1991 cult hit *Toto the Hero* and 1996's *The Eighth Day*. Neither received a nomination, but the third time could be the charm for the 58-year-old filmmaker. Since his latest feature, *The Brand New Testament*, premiered at Cannes in May, it has been embraced by critics and has become a crossover hit in Europe. The comedy's high-concept setup — God is alive and lives in Brussels — makes way for a playful examination of faith and philosophy after God's rebellious daughter hacks his computer and sends all the people in the world a text message revealing the time and method of their death.



Van Dormael

The film has a crazy premise. Where did the idea originate?

I never really know, but I think there was some resonance with a line from Woody Allen: "If God exists, I hope he has a good excuse." The first idea was to take God and put him in a very

concrete setting — so I picked Brussels, the city I live in and know inside out. The second idea was to give him a wife [played by Catherine Deneuve] and daughter and to make the daughter a rebellious teenager.

How have audiences reacted?

We've had screenings in very Catholic areas in Spain, Italy and Poland, and they were really good. I wasn't kidnapped by a dozen militant nuns — even if that is a fantasy of mine — and even in Belgium I was positively surprised. I think even if the pope — particularly this pope — saw this movie, he'd have a laugh.

Catherine Deneuve plays a woman who leaves her husband for a gorilla. How did you convince her to join the cast?

There wasn't much convincing — it was very quick. I sent her the script, and she said yes. She's afraid of nothing — not even being in bed with a gorilla who ends up being much more loving than her husband. **TJR**

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FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILMS

Mom's Bandaged Face? 'A Psychological-Terror-Chamber Drama'

The directors of Austria's Oscar submission *Goodnight Mommy* don't mind if their creepy thriller is called a horror movie BY GEORG SZALAI

Goodnight Mommy is the first narrative feature from writer-directors Veronika Franz and Severin Fiala, whose work includes the documentary *Kern*, about the controversial Austrian director Peter Kern. Their new film can't be classified among this awards season's more feel-good entries, but the two still have plenty to be happy about.

Austria has selected their film as the country's foreign-language Oscar submission, the duo recently signed with WME and they are celebrating the fact that *Mommy*, which was released stateside by Radius-TWC, has grossed nearly \$1.2 million at the U.S. box office, making it the highest-grossing film among the 2015 foreign-language contenders.

That U.S. take is something the team is particularly excited about, since their film didn't do very well back home. "It's crazy that so few people go see Austrian films in Austria," says Fiala. "It's not only a problem for our film."

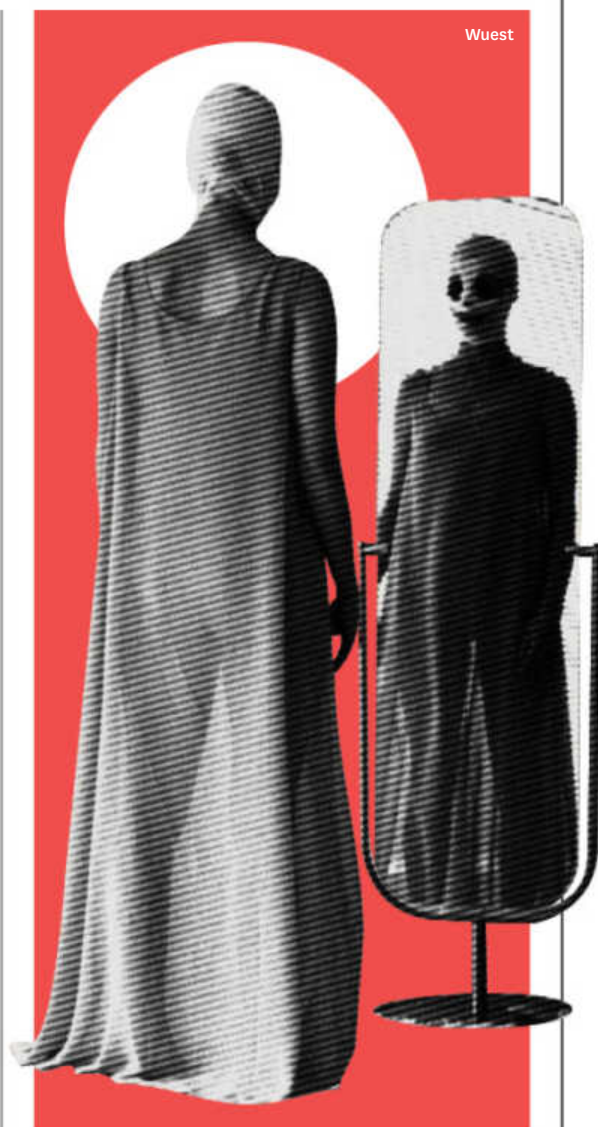
Adds Franz: "There's a milestone of 10,000 viewers that ensures you get funding for your next film in Austria. With the Oscar submission, we crossed that benchmark, because it attracted attention again in Austria. The Americans are marketing masters."

Mommy tells the unnerving story of twins who are traumatized when their mother, played by Susanne Wuest, returns home from surgery with a bandaged face. After a while, the boys begin to suspect that the person underneath the bandages may not be their mother after all.

The filmmakers say viewers have disagreed about exactly what genre the film belongs to. "Some say it is a psychological thriller, others call it a horror film, others say it's an art film," Franz says with a laugh. "One Austrian journalist called it a psychological-terror-chamber drama. I liked that best."

Fiala says that the only rule they followed was "we tried to make a good film that we ourselves would like to see in the cinema."

Of course, the fact that the film is talked about in horror terms could handicap it in its quest for an Oscar, since the foreign-language category tends to favor earnest dramas. But horror shouldn't be discounted



so quickly, since, as Franz says, "Horror films mostly are about death, loss, disease and things that traumatize people. They focus on existential issues. It's very superficial to say they don't touch on important issues."

When the filmmakers learned Austria had selected their film as the country's Oscar submission, they say, "We toasted with Bloody Marys." And if it doesn't secure a nom, Franz adds, "I get up [to watch] the Oscars every year. And if we don't get nominated, I'll still do that this year." **TJL**



Franz



Fiala

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and hair-raising suspense. Heineman wants to thrill us and shock us into awareness. In that, he succeeds marvelously.”

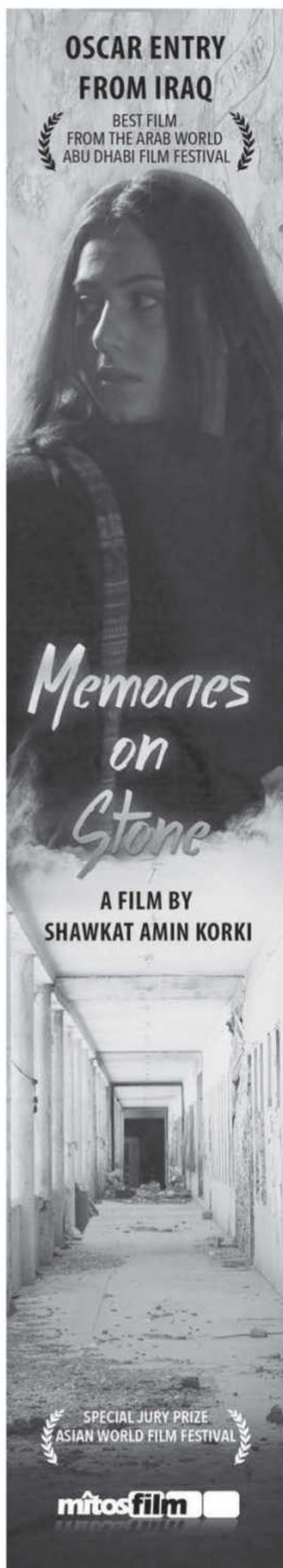
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CARTEL LAND

FROM EXECUTIVE PRODUCER KATHRYN BIGELOW

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FOREIGN-LANGUAGE FILMS



Mustang follows five independent-minded sisters growing up in Turkey.

French? Turkish? *Mustang's* Both

Deniz Gamze Erguven's drama about five sisters got the Cannes seal of approval and defied categorization BY RHONDA RICHFORD

Mustang is France's submission for the best foreign-language film Oscar, but it's a Turkish-language film that required subtitles in its home country. A coming-of-age drama directed Deniz Gamze Erguven, it didn't lose anything in the translation, though. It claimed the top prize in Directors' Fortnight at Cannes as well a European Film Award along with prizes across Germany, Russia and Bosnia.

The Turkish-French director's first feature, which revolves around five Turkish sisters who increasingly are isolated by their family as they near womanhood, also has managed to avoid the controversy that surrounded French director Jean-Jacques Annaud's *Wolf Totem*, which was disqualified as China's submission because of its top-heavy French team. Though *Mustang* was shot in Turkey, the country ponied up just a fraction of the French-German-Turkish co-production's \$1.4 million budget. And because Academy rules don't require a film to be in the language of the submitting country, it became eligible for Oscar consideration.

"France has embraced this film from the very first hour," says Erguven, noting that since she is a graduate of the famed La Femis film school, the powers that be in the French film community have watched her grow up. "In terms

of who is responsible for the film — France is. The movie wouldn't have existed at all, it wouldn't have been possible [without French support]."

On the other hand, critics in Turkey have complained that Erguven, who spent much of her childhood shuttling back and forth between the two countries while her father worked for the government, is insufficiently Turkish. The film does not adhere to the Turkish telenovela-drama style or its values, say critics, which has resulted in threats on Twitter.

But the 36-year-old filmmaker has not backed down. "I was so tired about the object of discussion not being cinema but my identity. I was like, 'OK guys, I'm foreign.' Some people say I'm not Turkish, and [some say] I'm not French. After a few weeks, I figured it was impossible."

She says she never has felt separated from either culture and now simply ignores the question by identifying as a filmmaker with her own worldview and visual language that straddles the two.

"To be in and out and not always feel the constraints you would as a woman in Turkey, it allows me to be able to articulate something about their everyday lives, which is in some ways more emotional," she says.

The title of the film, a nod to the horses that roam the plains of the Western U.S., was inspired by a line in the first draft of the script that compared youngest sister Lale to a wild animal. "As soon as we appropriated the word, it meant something to us," says Erguven of her work with co-writer Alice Winocour. "It became ours, and it became a specific temperament of the girls, a wildness and untamable quality."

The script was written in 2012, before the Turkish government cracked down on freedom of the press and banned Twitter during political protests in 2013. "The film

started to resonate completely differently, like [a scene in which] the computers are confiscated obviously had a very different resonance," she says.

While Erguven and her critics "didn't fall into each other's arms and say how much we love each other," she says she has heard from many in Turkey who have taken notice of the rare film that doesn't treat women like objects.

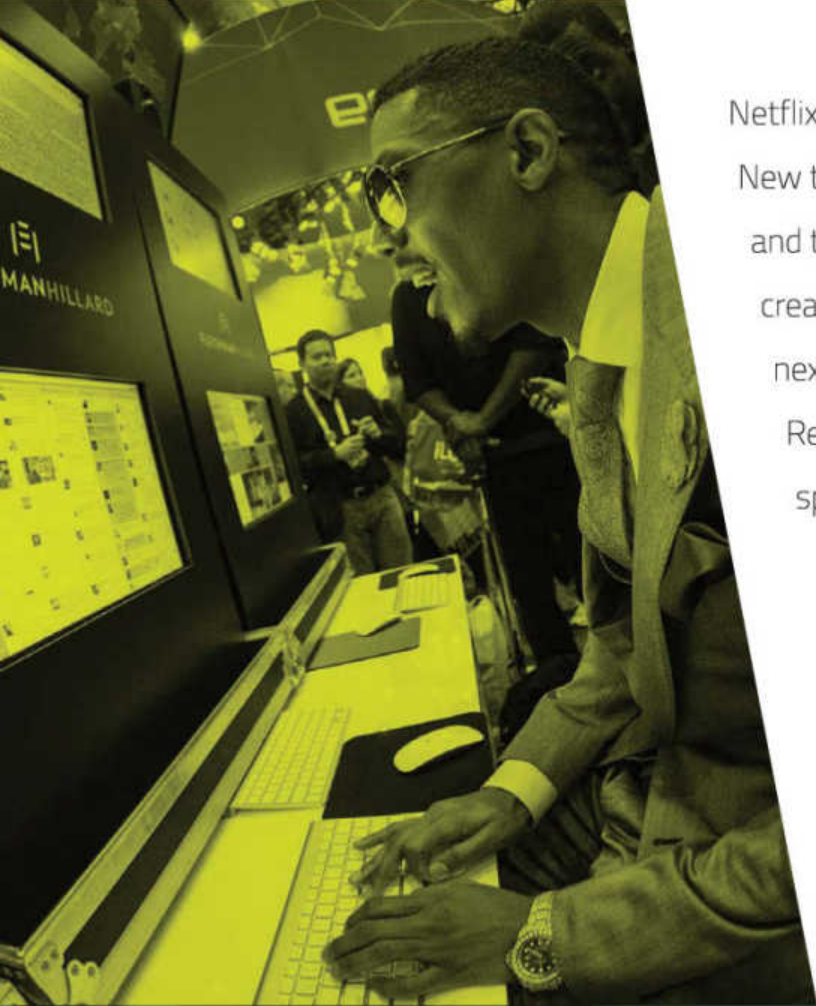
One commenter said the film forced him to notice the predominance of male-oriented stories on Turkish screens for the first time and called that "embarrassing for us." Adds Erguven, "It's been an interesting debate." **TUR**



Erguven



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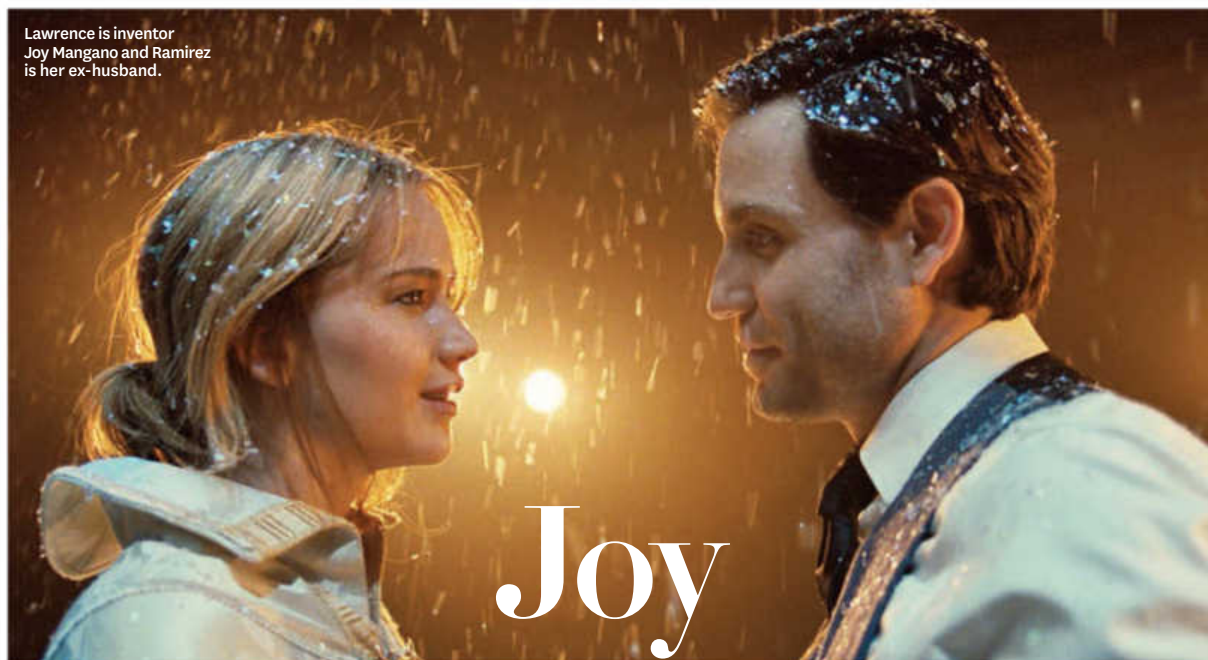


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Top: *Son of Saul*. 2015. Hungary. Directed by László Nemes. Courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics
Bottom: *Spotlight*. 2015. USA. Directed by Tom McCarthy. Courtesy of Open Road Films



Lawrence is inventor Joy Mangano and Ramirez is her ex-husband.

David O. Russell's film is a mess, but it's so fast, fun and full of energy that you may not care By Todd McCarthy

FOR SHEER WACKINESS, the family in the venerable farce *You Can't Take It With You* is given a run for its money by the clan at the center of *Joy*. David O. Russell's third straight film to have the good fortune of starring Jennifer Lawrence is a story of perseverance over ridiculous odds but spends much of its time examining the paralysis caused by the irrationalities of its madly neurotic characters. That the film itself is nearly as chaotic as the family it examines either can be regarded as an artistic correlative or a crippling defect,

but the splendidly dexterous cast ensures that this goofy success story keeps firing on all cylinders.

When a movie runs through four editors, it's usually a sign that something's amiss in pacing, coherence, tone or balance. All those issues apply here, but the verve and talent of Russell and his actors keep viewers in willing disbelief that all this could be happening (it's based on a true story).

The spirit of Preston Sturges hovers over Russell's shoulder as he lays out the roller-coaster life of Joy Mangano (Lawrence) across four decades. The turning point, and Joy's claim to fame, is her

invention of the self-wringing Miracle Mop, which she launched and hawked on the QVC telesales network in the 1990s. Many filmmakers (Sturges included) would have had great satiric fun with this, but for Russell her achievement is as legitimate as any other.

A mother of two, Joy presides over a family that includes hard-headed dad Rudy (Robert De Niro), who runs a garage, and ex-husband Tony (Edgar Ramirez), a Venezuelan would-be singer, both of whom now live in the basement of a home that also includes supportive grandma Mimi (Diane Ladd); mom Carrie (Virginia Madsen),

who has retreated into an addiction to daytime soaps; and eternally negative sister Peggy (Elisabeth Rohm). Joining the mix is a wealthy Italian woman, Trudi (Isabella Rossellini), who takes up with Rudy.

As the film jumps around in time, Joy is established as a doer who fills any vacuum created by others' inaction. Once she fashions her homemade mop, a device with a 300-foot cotton loop that's easily wrung out without mess, she aggressively markets it, securing investment from Trudi and worming her way in to see QVC exec Neil Walker (Bradley Cooper). Of course, myriad obstacles will be shoved in her path, and the developments in the second half make the story seem somewhat arch and artificial; things keep bouncing from the highest highs to the lowest lows with little in between.

Still, the actors are all wired and on their game. Lawrence brings grit and conviction to her characterization, even if what's missing is a deeper sense of an inner emotional life. Elsewhere, West Dylan Thordson and David Campbell's punchy score and sharply chosen musical samplings help paper over the film's transitions as it lurches through the years and characters' wildly changing circumstances.

Opens Friday, Dec. 25 (Fox)

Cast Jennifer Lawrence, Robert De Niro, Bradley Cooper

Director David O. Russell

Rated PG-13, 124 minutes

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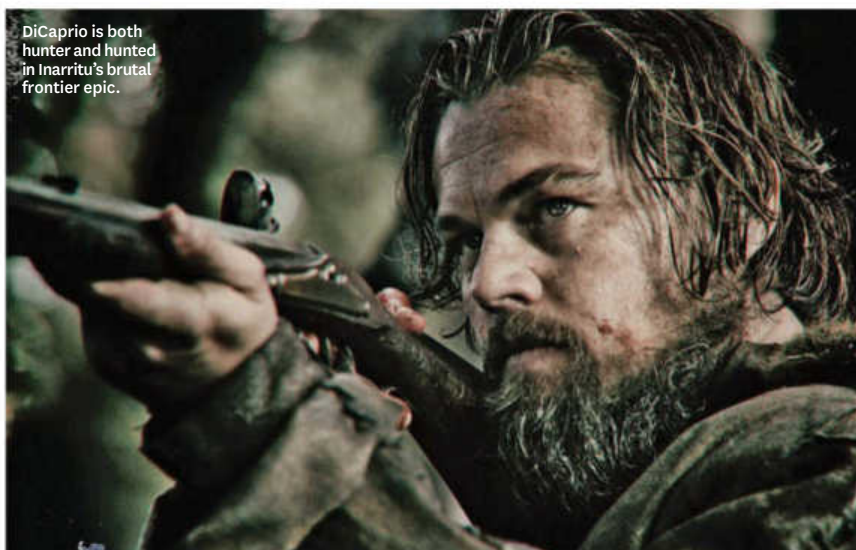
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SEPTEMBER FILM

16

DiCaprio is both hunter and hunted in Inarritu's brutal frontier epic.



The Revenant

Alejandro G. Inarritu's shockingly raw and riveting pre-Western stars Leonardo DiCaprio as a man stranded in the wild By Todd McCarthy

A TRADITIONAL OLD west survival-and-revenge tale assumes the dimensions of a harrowing voyage to the American frontier's heart of darkness in Alejandro G. Inarritu's new film. Pushing both brutal realism and visual poetry to the edge of what one customarily finds in mainstream filmmaking, Inarritu, cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki and a team of effects wizards have created a sensationally vivid and visceral portrait of human endurance under nearly intolerable conditions.

Inarritu has turned around his most

ambitious production within only a year of his awards-laden *Birdman*. Unlike that film, *The Revenant* uses plenty of cuts and takes place nearly entirely outdoors — but the fluid, prowling, sometimes gasp-inducing camera moves, along with the great depth of field, are recognizably similar.

Set in the Rockies in 1823, the story (based on Michael Punke's 2002 novel) centers on mountain man Hugh Glass (Leonardo DiCaprio). Glass has lived with the local Pawnee tribe, speaks its language, married a native woman and is raising their

son. But by virtue of his knowledge of the territory, he also is highly valued by a hunting expedition led by Capt. Andrew Henry (Domhnall Gleeson). With winter closing in, the white men decide to head home, setting up a devastating scene in which Glass is charged by a mother grizzly bear. The attack provides the latest and most startling example of the sophisticated technology being used in the service of ultra-realism.

When weather and steep terrain make carrying an invalid Glass impossible, the departing party leaves two men to tend to him: the hulking, ill-tempered John Fitzgerald (Tom Hardy) and earnest youngster Jim Bridger (Will Poulter). But after a couple of days, Fitzgerald abandons Glass and bullies Bridger into following suit.

Glass' struggle to survive is the core of the story, and it's extraordinarily compelling and terrifying to behold. Obscured by heavy animal skins, a scruffy beard and even longer hair, DiCaprio delivers a deeply committed characterization, and Hardy creates a memorable and very disturbing villain. Production designer Jack Fisk is in his element, and the score by Ryuichi Sakamoto and Alva Noto is effectively ominous and grim.

Opens *Friday, Dec. 25 (Fox)*
Cast *Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hardy, Domhnall Gleeson, Will Poulter*
Director *Alejandro G. Inarritu*
Rated *R, 156 minutes*



Romeo + Juliet

Top 5 DiCaprio

1. THE WOLF OF WALL STREET (2013)

The role of Jordan Belfort was right in the actor's seductive-scumbag comfort zone, but his charisma carried Martin Scorsese's film.

2. WHAT'S EATING GILBERT GRAPE (1993)

DiCaprio's transformative turn as a mentally challenged teen upstaged co-star Johnny Depp and proved he was more than a pretty face and brooding 'tude.

3. CATCH ME IF YOU CAN (2002)

The actor's boyishly charming performance as a con artist in Steven Spielberg's stylish period romp showcased his lighter side and crack comic timing.

4. SHUTTER ISLAND (2010)

DiCaprio did some of his most subtle work in Scorsese's elaborate thriller, using tiny gestures to plant hints that his character isn't all he seems.

5. ROMEO + JULIET (1996)

Baz Luhrmann's modern-dress spin on the Shakespeare classic was a perfect fit for the star's swoon-inducing swagger, physical presence and puppyish intensity. — LESLIE FELPERIN

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Best Actor Paul Dano

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The Diary of a Teenage Girl

Best Screenplay

Tom McCarthy and Josh Singer

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Mya Taylor

Tangerine

Bingham Ray

Breakthrough Director

Jonas Carpignano

Mediterranea

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and Radhika Vaz, Creators

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Liev Schreiber,
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RAPID-ROUND Q&A

Jennifer Jason Leigh

The *Hateful Eight* and *Anomalisa* star, 53, gets grilled on Tarantino, Trump and Tinseltown (hint: she prefers it to NYC)

By Pamela McClintock

Your *Hateful Eight* director, Quentin Tarantino, in three words?

Genius, enthusiastic, loving.

And Charlie Kaufman, your *Anomalisa* director?

Imaginative, brilliant, sweetheart.

Your *Hateful Eight* character is treated brutally. What do you say to people who allege Tarantino's a misogynist?

He's about the most un-misogynistic person I've ever met. He loves women. He writes the best parts for women around, really.

Aside from Tarantino and Kaufman, you've worked with Altman, Cronenberg, Kubrick, the Coen brothers, Ron Howard and Jane Campion. Who would make the best president?

That's such a crazy question. I'm going to go with Jane. She's very democratic, very thoughtful and very caring. She'd be great.

Speaking of possible presidents — Hillary, Bernie or Trump?

I really like Bernie, though I didn't love his gun control answer [in the debates]. And there's a lot I like about Hillary. It's kind of a tossup between them. Obviously, Trump is hilarious and a lot of fun to watch, and I really hope he becomes the Republican nominee.

Taylor Swift or Adele?

Adele.

What's the most "Hollywood" thing about your life?

I was night shooting until 5 a.m. At 10 a.m., I had a manicurist come and give me a mani-pedi. Then I had hair and makeup at my house. And now I'm in an SUV doing an interview on my way to a press junket. That's about as Hollywood as it gets.

Is it hard to have a normal life here?

I grew up in Hollywood with



Leigh is a fugitive wanted dead or alive in *The Hateful Eight* (out Dec. 25).



In *Anomalisa* (out Dec. 30), Leigh voices a woman who has a brief affair with a married man.

parents in this business. So for me, it's like being asked, "How do you feel about your neighborhood?" This is my home. It's like I grew up in a railroad town and knew I was going to work for the railroad. I was so naive growing up; I didn't know this was a hard world to break into or that it was a lot of people's dream. It just seemed like the reality. I don't view it from some sort of outside perspective.

You've also lived in New York. Do you prefer New York or L.A.?

Well, New York really has the vibrancy of a city. There are great

restaurants, and you can walk everywhere. But I have to say, I really am an L.A. girl.

Are you letting your lawn here die?

I've cut down on water enormously. I don't have a lot of lawn. I have grass around my pool, which is dying in clumps, and I've got a little area in the front that has grass — and it's not doing great because I'm conserving.

You've done several Broadway plays (including *Cabaret* and *Proof*). Do you prefer acting onstage or onscreen?

Screen. It's closer. It's more truthful. **TIER**

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Deborah Young, *Hollywood Reporter*

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– Boyd Van Hoeij

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– Joe Morgenstern

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F Is for Family

Netflix's new animated series boasts sharp humor and real depth of feeling

By Daniel J. Fienberg

NETFLIX'S NEW ANIMATED COMEDY *F Is for Family* chronicles the minor and major cataclysms affecting a single clan. Based loosely on the childhood of stand-up comic Bill Burr, who created the series with *The Simpsons* veteran Michael Price, the six-episode first season portrays setbacks and triumphs that, in isolation, are the stuff of standard family sitcoms. But the often hilarious running gags acquire dramatic heft as they pile up, producing genuine emotional payoffs.

Set in 1973, the show centers on Frank Murphy (Burr), a pudgy, balding, beleaguered low-level baggage handler thrust into management after his boss meets an end that's both shocking and side-splitting. His wife, Sue



The Murphys find their way amid the shifting mores of 1970s America.

(Laura Dern), wonders if her life raising a family is enough. Eldest son Kevin (Justin Long) is only 14, but he's already a drug-using burnout. Bill (Haley Reinhart) is 11, and his relative sensitivity makes him a target for a bully and his devil-may-care younger sister Maureen.

Episode to episode, *F Is for Family* is fueled by light comic circumstances: Frank struggles to balance his new authority with a desire to remain "one of the guys" at work; various attempts to scare Kevin straight invariably go awry; Bill is horrified by football stadium bathrooms; Maureen refuses to adhere to gender-specific Halloween costumes. It's basic material but executed with smart writing, expressive animation and smooth vocal work,

particularly from Burr and *American Idol* favorite Reinhart as well as guest Sam Rockwell as a Matthew McConaughey-style himbo neighbor.

The expertly realized '70s setting embraces every tacky

detail, and witty character touches abound (Frank's favorite TV show is a *Mannix*-esque cop drama featuring a hero named Colt Luger, whose catchphrase is "Sometimes a man's gotta do what a man does").

Kitsch and laughter aside, what makes the show special is its cumulative substantiveness. Frank's involvement in labor strife, Sue's personal dissatisfaction and Bill's preadolescent traumas are gradually deepening storylines developed with adult language, sexuality and a sharp eye for unfiltered behavior. *F Is for Family* is funny, yes, but also something even more notable: honest.

Airdate *Friday, Dec. 18 (Netflix)*



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REVIEWS *theater*



Brightman is a rocker turned prep school teacher.

School of Rock

Andrew Lloyd Webber and Julian Fellowes retool the Jack Black movie as an exuberant stage musical — and the kids steal the show By David Rooney

YOU DON'T REALIZE HOW BADLY you needed to see a 12-year-old boy powering through a face-melting guitar solo, or his pint-size female counterpart pouting like the coolest of rocker chicks, until you witness them in the disarming new musical adaptation of *School of Rock*. Led by Alex Brightman in a star-making performance that genuflects to Jack Black in the movie while putting his own stamp on the role of Dewey Finn, the show knows its prime asset is the cast of ridiculously talented kids, ranging in age from 9 to 13.

In terms of screen-to-stage remakes, this is neither the most imaginative nor the most pedestrian. But any nitpicking about the craft of book writer Julian Fellowes (a long way from *Downton Abbey*), composer-producer Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyricist Glenn Slater has to be allayed by the acknowledgment that they celebrate the strengths of the source material, about a failed rocker who finagles an elementary school teaching gig and enters his students in a Battle of the Band competition.

Richard Linklater's 2003 comedy is the most mainstream film of his career. But he gave it an edge, tempering the story's cuteness (buttoned-up prep schoolers liberate their inner rock gods) with intelligence and emotion. The creative team on the adaptation wisely chooses not to mess with those ingredients. Where the musical distinguishes itself is in providing the pleasure of being in the same physical space as the preteen stars while they "Stick It to the Man," to quote one of the show's catchier songs.

It might sound lame to suggest that *School of Rock* works because of a diverse bunch of adorable kids (including Brandon Niederauer on guitar; Evie Dolan on bass; Jared Parker on keyboard; Dante Melucci on drums; and Carly Gendell, Taylor Caldwell and Bobbi MacKenzie on vocals). But their infectious delight as they etch their personalities and seize their individual and collective right to be heard is irresistible.

With his comic energy and explosive physicality, Brightman gives what is undeniably a star turn. But his performance also is inclusive of every performer around him, particularly the young ones. The actor engages with the kids in ways that indicate genuine affection, whether Dewey is brushing them off while nursing a hangover or is driving them to unleash the rocker within.

Lloyd Webber's commercial instincts are sharper here than on his recent shows, even if his songs are more often efficient than inspired. The chief exhilarating exception is "You're in the Band," during which Dewey assesses the skill sets of his students and adapts them to their new roles. Meanwhile, the direction of Laurence Connor (who staged the current *Les Mis* revival) is not always the most elegant — but the minute the kids launch into head-banging release, all is forgiven.

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Music Andrew Lloyd Webber

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Robots V.I.N.CENT. and B.O.B. and four mysterious "android drones" promote *The Black Hole* at a March 1980 event in the U.K.

In 1979, Disney Wanted the Force to Be With *Black Hole*

A LONG TIME AGO, before Disney could buy *Star Wars* outright, it tried launching its own sci-fi franchise with 1979's *The Black Hole*. The years immediately following *Star Wars*' May 1977 release — during which 20th Century Fox's space epic amassed \$230 million domestically (equivalent to \$930 million today) — were heady ones for films set in space: *Black Hole* opened during the Christmas season alongside *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, *Alien* had been a summer hit and even James Bond had achieved zero gravity in *Moonraker*.

All of those releases wanted to get a head start on *The Empire Strikes Back*, which was opening in May 1980. But none got a review like the one *Black Hole* got in *The Hollywood Reporter*. In it, *THR* film critic Arthur Knight begins: "Despite a title that manages to be at once sexist and racist, *The Black Hole* is far from controversial." (This about a family adventure set in deep space.) "It was basically a space version of Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*," explains Robert Forster, now 74, who in the film plays a spaceship commander who stumbles upon a mysterious vessel led by a

The Black Hole

Despite a title that manages to be at once sexist and racist, "*The Black Hole*" is far from controversial. Indeed, this Walt Disney production proves to be merely a reworking of their earlier hit, "*20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*," with Maximilian Schell a space-age Captain Nemo. I have no idea whether screenwriters Jeb Rosebrook and Gerry Day ever saw "*20,000 Leagues*," but it's no

matter. Tradition runs strong at Disney's, and "*The Black Hole*" fits almost too firmly in that tradition.

In the current spate of space age sci-fiers, this entry is easily the drabest and most derivative. Its colorations are raw neon, reminiscent of the opening titles on ABC's "Movie of the Week." The spacecraft, the *Palomino*, looks like nothing so much as Atlantic City's

Captain Nemo type, played by Maximilian Schell. The sway of *Star Wars* on *Hole* is unmistakable: It features laser battles, helper droids who could be R2-D2's cousins and a Darth Vader-like heavy in the form of Schell's henchrobot, Maximilian (no relation). While not a critical success, *Hole* is credited with radically advancing computerized effects — though much of its magic was achieved the old-fashioned way. "This was

one of the last films that had the old Disney masters doing things like weightlessness with wires. I don't think greenscreens existed," recalls Forster of the \$20 million production, then Disney's priciest. It grossed only \$36 million, but there were other lines of revenue: A deal with Mego Toys produced 6 million dolls and models of the movie's *USS Palomino*. And like the *Palomino*, a planned remake is floating in limbo.

— BILL HIGGINS

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